

# Summarised inspection findings

**Parklands School**

**Argyll and Bute Council**

**SEED No: 8305943**

**06 March 2018**

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher and staff are committed to meeting the needs of children, young people and their families. Staff have a good understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of pupils and their families. For example, the school has a good understanding of the specific needs of some children, young people and their families who are associated with the naval base. Staff in the school work well with partners to support this group of learners and their families. Staff take good account of the care and welfare needs of children and young people whilst at the same time ensuring that educational attainment and achievement is a priority. There is a shared vision within the school that all learners should have every opportunity to learn to their full potential and develop skills for life after school. The school's vision, values and aims was developed in collaboration with staff, parents and pupils and these reflect day to day practice. The headteacher and staff have identified the need to revise these further to reflect national and local priorities related to improving attainment and skills development.
- The headteacher is well regarded within the school community. Her appointment six years ago followed a period of staffing instability within the senior leadership team. Staff, parents and stakeholders identify the positive impact she has had on the school. For example, improving links with partners in the community resulting in a wider range of educational experiences for children and young people and a stronger focus on educational attainment and achievement. The headteacher recognises the impact of nurturing approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people. She has implemented nurturing approaches within the school and supported staff to work with other children in the Helensburgh area through the In-reach/out-reach programme. The principal teachers support the headteacher effectively and take appropriate responsibility for key areas of the work of the school. Teaching staff and support staff have appropriate opportunities to lead on areas of improvement work such as working groups, swimming programmes and reading initiatives. Staff are encouraged and supported with their professional learning and have identified how opportunities to gain qualifications such as a Bachelor of Arts in Childhood Practice is impacting positively on their work in the school.
- Staff across the school have a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. For example improvement priorities related to communication approaches for children and young people was as a result of self-evaluation and reflection of the challenges faced by a few young people who have profound learning needs. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) was reviewed and as a result, communication approaches have improved for young people who have profound learning needs. A few identified priorities

have not been progressed as planned due to staffing and other issues. There should now be a focus on ensuring areas of improvement such as developing tracking and monitoring approaches are progressed. The impact of improvement priority tasks should be evaluated to ensure they result in improved outcomes for all learners.

- Children and young people have opportunities to lead on aspects of the work of the school through committees such as the Pupil Council. Children and young people also participate in specific class or school roles to help them develop an understanding of taking responsibility and leadership. There is scope for children and young people to develop leadership skills further through a wider range of opportunities both in school and in the local community. Children and young people would also benefit from opportunities to help them develop a better understanding of themselves as learners and to be given greater opportunities for independence.
- The senior leadership team, together with staff, have developed approaches to tracking progress and attainment. These approaches provide staff with relevant information that allows planning to build on prior learning. However, there now needs to be a further review of how tracking approaches are impacting on raising attainment and ensuring challenge, especially for more able learners within the school. In reviewing approaches to tracking and monitoring, staff should evaluate how they plan, including planning within individualised educational plans (IEPs), to ensure they meet better the individual needs of all children and young people.
- The In-reach/out-reach service offers support to children from eleven mainstream primaries across Helensburgh. This service is effectively led by the headteacher with staff from the school taking responsibility for assessing and supporting children and evaluating programmes. The nurture programmes delivered as part of the service are having a positive impact on almost all children with improved engagement within their own mainstream setting. Staff routinely reflect on their practice and work effectively with parents and staff in mainstream schools to evaluate the impact of programmes.
- The school received Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This funding has been used to develop literacy and wellbeing programmes. Staff should now evaluate the impact of these programmes to ensure they raise attainment and achievement and improve outcomes for children and young people. Parents would welcome further involvement in decision making in relation to PEF spending.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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 school has a very calm, caring and nurturing ethos in which children and young people enjoy positive relationships with staff. The majority of children and young people are beginning to develop relationships with their peers. Almost all children and young people are happy to come to school and enjoy learning. Staff value and respect them as individuals. Most children and young people interact well with staff in almost all lessons using a variety of communication methods including vocalisation, gesture, objects, pictures, symbols, and for a few, digital technology and speech. In almost all lessons, supported by skilled staff, almost all children and young people are motivated to learn and engage well.
- Most children and young people behave well in almost all lessons and they are supported well by staff if they disengage. All children and young people are able to work in a class group alongside others and a majority can work in small groups and pairs. Staff should provide more opportunities for children and young people to develop skills through social interaction and working collaboratively. A few children work well independently on tasks supported by a high level of direct staff intervention. The school should continue to provide opportunities for more children and young people to work as independent learners. Most children and young people need further support to understand the purpose of, and take responsibility, for their own learning.
- Children and young people experience valuable learning opportunities across the four capacities. In particular, they have opportunities to learn beyond the classroom and the school grounds. This includes worthwhile community trips, residential experiences, outdoor learning and working with a wide range of partners. The school should consider planning for these to ensure skills development based on prior learning.
- Digital technology is used effectively to enhance most children's and young people's learning across a number of curricular areas such as making movies in literacy. Staff should continue to increase children's and young people's use of digital technology as part of developing skills for life.

### Quality of teaching

- The school's vision for children and young people 'to be the best they can be' is underpinning teaching approaches. Most teachers are using a range of creative and imaginative learning and teaching approaches, underpinned by sensory media, to engage children and young people in learning. For example they use digital technology to provide a range of songs, poems and stories to enhance their teaching and provide opportunities for

choice. Almost all teachers' explanations of learning are clear and the majority use questioning effectively. A few staff would benefit from developing their questioning skills to ensure that it promotes curiosity, independence and confidence and challenges children and young people to reflect of their learning. Staff provide encouragement and praise in lessons to motivate children and young people to remain on task.

- Children and young people respond well to personalised support. Across the school, they experience a range of varied learning experiences and there is an appropriate balance between choosing activities and teacher led learning. However, in the majority of classrooms, learning activities are not sufficiently differentiated to provide effective challenge for the majority of children and young people. Many tasks are too easy or too hard to support children and young people to make improvements in their learning.

### **Effective use of assessment**

- Teachers use a variety of assessment tools, including standardised tests, to support their professional judgements, which contributes to knowing the needs of children and young people well. Phonological assessments are used to support early communication development. The In-reach/out-reach service use Boxall profiles firstly as a baseline assessment tool and then periodically to demonstrate children's and young people's progress in developing self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Children's and young people's progress is assessed regularly throughout the year and a traffic light system is used to identify those children who are making expected progress and those who require additional support. This has resulted in a few children and young people benefitting from individual targeted support and has had a positive impact on their reading. Approaches to assessment requires further development to ensure that it forms a more integral part of the planning process.
- All children have detailed assessment folders. Initially using photographs to evidence progress, these were often not annotated with evaluative comments to help identify next steps in learning. The school, in recognising this, has developed further these folders to include photographs with annotated notes using a 'make, say, do, write' approach. This is beginning to enable teachers to identify next steps in learning.
- Whilst teachers collect data through the tracking system, the leadership team should now consider how it analyses this to inform further school improvement and positively impact on learner's attainment over time. The school should review and evaluate the use of IEPs, long term and medium term planning formats and its nine step tracking document and in doing so consider streamlining their systems to avoid unnecessary duplication.
- There are examples of Assessment is for Learning strategies being used throughout the school, notably the use of learning intentions, but these are not yet consistently used to support children and young people to understand what they are learning.

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

- Teachers use a range of information to support planning of learning and teaching. This includes information about children's and young people's individual needs, progress, interests and challenges. IEPs identify long and short-term targets in health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Long-term targets are not always specific and measureable and relate more as curriculum targets. Short-term targets are variable in quality and are not always differentiated. Most short-term targets are not challenging enough and too easily achievable for most children and young people. Using national guidance the school should

review its target setting procedures, including the collection of IEP target data, to ensure that barriers to learning are fully addressed, contribute to raising attainment and closing the achievement gap across the school.

- Teachers work collaboratively to develop a yearly overview of learning in all subjects linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes at early level to ensure curriculum progression. There is scope for these plans to be reviewed to ensure there are more regular opportunities to practice and revisit relevant learning in core subjects.
- Teachers plan in more detail each term, using CfE experiences and outcomes to identify a variety of activities to support learning. Whilst success criteria and assessments are identified, they are not yet sufficiently individualised.
- Teachers track children's and young people's progress using a nine step tracking tool across all curriculum areas at early level into first level and for each subject organiser. For a few children this is constraining progress over time. The school should now consider developing tracking systems for first and second level to better meet the needs of all children and young people. The school has begun to track learner engagement levels and should continue with plans to introduce a progressive framework to measure skills development.
- The headteacher discusses progress in learning with teachers at tracking meetings. However, these are not yet focused sufficiently on challenging teachers to raise attainment and close the attainment gap.
- The school has identified the need for improved systems for moderating practice and understanding of standards. Staff would benefit greatly from more moderation activities both internally and with other schools to improve their understanding of shared standards.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

- Learning pathways at early level have been developed for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They are linked to the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence and support achievement for the majority of children and young people. The school recognises that these learning pathways are limiting progress for some children and young people who should be working at first level and second level. Staff have identified the need to further develop learning pathways, particularly health and wellbeing, in partnership with a local primary school.
- In the senior phase young people have the option of choosing from two learning pathways. Both pathways lead to accreditation for almost all young people through Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), Scottish Qualification Authority personal achievement awards and National Qualifications.
- There is scope to increase challenge and to take better account of the seven curriculum design principles when planning for learning across the curriculum. Children and young people have opportunities to make choices such as identifying what they would like to learn about specific topics. The school should now provide them with more opportunities to choose what they want to learn.
- Various whole school theme weeks such as Robert Burns', health and wellbeing, maths and literacy, give children and young people the opportunity to apply their literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing learning in new and relevant contexts. Teachers are not yet selecting a range of relevant linked experiences and outcomes across the curriculum to deliver interdisciplinary learning (IDL) topics with the aim of supporting coherence and relevance. Following national guidance, the school should now review its approach to IDL.
- A range of partners provide opportunities for children and young people to develop further their skills for life, learning and work. The school has recognised the need to develop a skills pathway in order to capture a wider range of experiences and outcomes for children and young people and provide improved evidence of progress in their learning.
- Good use is made of the school grounds and local community to support children's and young people's learning outdoors. Visits to local shops provide rich experiences to practice and use learning in real life contexts. The school uses its garden area well to support understanding of gardening, the environment, science and sustainability.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- Parents and carers are positive about the child centred approach of the school. The school has established positive and regular communication with parents and regularly asks for feedback from them. Parents are confident to engage with staff on both a day to day informal way and through more formal meetings. The school has both a Parent Council and a parent focus group and are actively attempting to increase membership of both groups.
- Parents are well informed about children's and young people's learning and progress including in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and wider achievements.



## 2.1: Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, children and young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

- The headteacher and staff have created a nurturing ethos across the school and as a result, almost all children and young people are happy and enthusiastic about being in school. Relationships between staff, children and young people are positive and pupils are valued and respected. The recent development of communication approaches has allowed children and young people to present their views and make choices. Work in this area should continue to ensure children and young people are provided with every opportunity to make decisions about their learning, care and wider school issues. Staff have identified that a further review of the health and wellbeing curriculum is required to ensure there is appropriate progression as children and young people move through the school.
- Children are provided with a wide range of experiences and opportunities to improve their wellbeing and keep safe and healthy. This includes a range of active and sports activities, experiences to help pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and learning to help them consider risks associated with digital technology. As a result, almost all children are developing a good understanding of their wellbeing and are able to participate in a range of physical activities. Young people benefit from residential educational experiences and have achieved success in challenging outdoor activities such as canoeing and caving.
- Staff in the school work effectively with a range of partners to identify and support the needs of children and young people. For example, allied health professional and social work services work collaboratively with school staff to plan and evaluate interventions such as physiotherapy programmes. Useful documents are in place such as behaviour plans and health care plans to ensure that staff have access to relevant information. As a result, children's and young people's wellbeing needs are appropriately met and plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that interventions and supports are appropriate. Child's plans include wellbeing indicators to identify specific interventions and these plans are detailed and provide useful information to enable staff to effectively meet needs. Staff should now review their approaches to IEPs to ensure that these plans result in improved outcomes and raise attainment and achievement. A few children have coordinated support plans and these are reviewed and updated regularly.
- Staff understand their responsibilities related to child protection and keeping children safe. Procedures developed by the education authority are in place to offer guidance for staff on how to report and record any concerns that they may have. The school, together with the education authority, should develop a child protection policy that takes account of the context of the school and national issues. The policy should include protocols for reporting

and recording and these protocols should be clearly displayed in the school. Staff would benefit from further professional learning related to reporting child protection concerns.

- All children and young people are fully included in all aspects of school life. There is a strong sense of equality for all children and staff ensure all learners are supported appropriately to enable them to access a wide range of activities both in school and off campus. The headteacher and staff ensure that the school is viewed as an important aspect of the Helensburgh community. A range of educational activities take place in shops and other amenities in the local and wider community to enable residents and others stakeholders to interact with pupils.
- The In-reach/out-reach service is resulting in improved wellbeing outcomes for mainstream children who require support in relation to their social and emotional needs. Staff have developed referral procedures which identify children who would benefit from additional support. Staff who deliver nurture programmes have correctly identified the need to further review referral criteria. Initial and ongoing assessments throughout the programme provide staff, parents and mainstream schools with relevant information about progress.

### 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, most children and young people at Parklands School achieve positive outcomes over time, taking into account achievement, attainment, communication, positive destinations, engagement with others and behaviour. Parents and partners report high levels of satisfaction with the school and with the outcomes children and young people achieve.

#### Attainment in Literacy and Numeracy

- Most children and young people are making progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills taking account of their additional support needs. In particular, most children and young people are making good progress in developing their communication skills. According to the school's own information, most children and young people are working within the early level of Curriculum for Excellence with a few working on aspects of the first level in literacy and numeracy. However, a few children and young people are not attaining as well as they could. We have asked the school to further develop its resources and curriculum framework to increase the level of challenge for those children and young people who need it.
- The school needs to provide a better summary of whole-school progress and trends in relation to attainment and achievement especially for more able learners within the broad general education. The school now needs to pull together a cohesive overview of whole-school progress and thus identify areas of strength and aspects for further development. This would provide a more coherent picture, both individually, in cohorts, and as a whole school.

#### Literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children's and young people's attainment in the broad general education and senior phase in literacy and English language is satisfactory with less than half making good or very good progress from their prior learning.
- In the early stages, most children are beginning to listen in groups for short periods to stories, rhymes and songs and the majority can follow simple instructions. The majority of children are beginning to take turns in small group and class activities. A majority of children, supported with, for example objects, pictures and symbols, can communicate simple words. A few children can use sentences to express their needs. A majority of children listen to others and a few take into account the opinions of others in small group and class activities.

- The majority of children enjoy listening to stories, poetry and information text such as recipes. A few children are beginning to read simple words and texts. A few children can identify initial sounds when supported and a few can read simple stories independently. The majority of children are beginning to sequence stories when supported with objects, pictures or symbols. A few can recognise CVC words such as cat, pat, hat.
- Most children at the early stages can make marks in paint, with pencils and using digital technology. The majority of children can overwrite patterns with support, and a few can copy and make patterns. A few can make initial letters in sand, play dough and foam. A few can hold a pencil, are beginning to form letters, and write their first names.
- At the upper stages, the majority of children and young people are able to take part in group discussions at their own level, and can give and receive feedback on their work and that of others. They are beginning to express opinions on things in their class and in the school as a whole. The majority of children and young people are able to follow a simple series of instructions, with support appropriate support. A few children can follow simple written instructions.
- A few children and young people in the upper stages are beginning to read simple age appropriate stories for pleasure. They can use information from recipes, signs in the community and instructions in their daily lives.
- At the upper stages, a few children and young people can write simple evaluations of their learning, write an account of a story they have heard and write thank you letters. They would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write creatively.

### **Numeracy**

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics, depending on their individual needs. A few are making good or very good progress from their prior learning. At the lower stages, children experience number through stories, play and songs. The majority are able to match the correct number and a few can count sets to ten. At the upper stages, the majority of young people can recall the days of the week and the months of the year. A few can name a variety of 2d and 3d shapes. At the senior phase, most young people can use a calculator and can recognise the time identifying o'clock, half past and quarter to and past the hour.
- Across all stages in the school, children and young people do not access enough discrete numeracy and mathematics lessons. There are also a number of opportunities throughout the school week to incorporate numeracy into other curricular areas which are not utilised.

### **Attainment over time**

- In recent years, according to the school's own data, almost all young people in the senior phase achieved a good number of qualifications and personal achievement awards. Data provided by the school shows young people consistently achieve National Qualification unit awards at National 1 and 2 predominantly in literacy and mathematics. Other National Qualifications achieved included independent living skills, food preparation, music, practical craft skills and multimedia applications. The school recognises there is scope to improve pupil attainment further especially the range and number of SQA and wider achievement awards available for young people at the senior phase. The school should build on existing partnerships with local mainstream schools, colleges and community and business partners to help to further develop the curriculum and raise attainment and achievement.

- The In-reach/out-reach service is successful in supporting children and young people to develop their health and wellbeing and to achieve within their mainstream school.

### **Achievement**

- Children and young people achieve well through participating in a wide range of activities in the school and the local community. They build their confidence and self-efficacy through planning enterprise events to raise funds for a number of charities. Child and young people also benefit from performing in whole school drama presentations, participating in residential experiences and engaging in a range of sporting activities including tennis and cycling.
- Children and young people are given opportunities to achieve through participating in workshops provided by school visitors, including Police Scotland and the BBC Build It Scotland Event.
- At the senior phase, young people participate well in a range of work placements with local businesses and community providers. These placements are carefully planned and bespoke to individual young people's interests and needs. Young people also attend college placements and participate in voluntary work in the local community. These activities are highly valued by children and young people and have contributed greatly towards raising the profile of the school in the Helensburgh area. Furthermore, such activities play a prominent role in supporting young people to develop the skills to successfully move on into positive destinations either returning to mainstream school or post-school destinations including further education and employment.
- Children and young people gain a few accredited awards through their participation in wider achievement activities. These include ASDAN awards, cycling awards and rosettes and achievements from Riding for the Disabled. There is scope for children and young people to achieve more accreditation for their achievements in school and the local community.
- Children, young people and parents are involved in decisions about the life and work of the school. For example, the pupil council contribute towards organising school events and the parents' focus group are consulted on whole school improvement including pupil equity funding. There is scope for learners and parents to play a more prominent role in the life and work of the school including taking on additional responsibility in supporting improvement and change.

### **Equity**

- The school works well in providing equitable learning experiences for children and young people based on their identified learning needs.

## School choice of QI: 2.5 Family Learning

- **Engaging families in learning**
- **Early interventions and preventions**
- **Quality of family learning programmes**

- The school has developed strong relationships with children and their families. Most parents speak highly of the school's work especially the caring and supportive ethos within the school. They value the regular communication through the home-school diaries and find staff approachable and knowledgeable about their child's needs.
- There are opportunities to build on the positive relationships the school has with parents to explore what family learning opportunities could be developed which would add to the skills and wellbeing of both children and their families. Such developments should be progressed in full partnership with parents, children and where relevant, other partners in the community, to ensure they meet family needs both efficiently and effectively.
- Parents are supported to be actively and meaningfully involved in their child's learning and life at the school. The daily home/school diaries provide useful information to parents about their child's learning. The school also invites parents to a range of events and performances such as the Christmas Café, school show and parents evenings. Parents are also invited to a range of training events including signing using Makaton and understanding autism. However, only a small number of parents attend these training events and the school should now work more closely with parents to identify dates and times which are better suited for them to attend.
- The school is keen to offer high quality targeted support to families, with help from partners that enable them to access learning activities which meet their interests. There is scope for families to be more engaged in this area and participate in designing and delivering high quality learning programmes within the school and local community.
- The In-reach/out-reach service meaningfully involves parents and in some cases other family members in their child's learning. This supports parents to build on learning at home. The service is experienced and effective at taking into account barriers to learning that children and young people have and working with parents to help overcome them.
- The school could consider introducing a more structured calendar series of monthly events and sessions to offer to families over the academic year. In particular, literacy and numeracy sessions delivered by staff could enable parents and wider family members to gain a deeper understanding of what is taught at the school and the methodologies deployed. This could support the next step of moving from parental involvement towards family learning, foster stronger home-school links and improve outcomes for children.

## 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.



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