

Summarised inspection findings

Armadale Primary School

West Lothian Council

27 November 2018

Key contextual information

Armadale Primary School is situated in the village of Armadale, West Lothian.

The school has undergone a number of staffing changes recently. Currently, the senior leadership team consists of an acting headteacher, who was previously the depute headteacher; a depute headteacher, who has been in post since August 2018; and four principal teachers. Two of these have only been in their current posts since August 2018.

The school roll is 414, allocated across 16 classes. The school also has an Early Learning Centre.

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

- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching is good. The quality of learning and teaching is supported well by the nurturing ethos and positive, respectful relationships which exist throughout the school. These relationships help children to feel valued as individuals. Children behave well and are very proud of their school.
- Most children enjoy and engage confidently in their learning. In most classes, this is well-matched to their needs and children receive appropriate challenge. To develop children's independence and sense of responsibility, they would benefit from leading or exercising choice in their learning more consistently across the school. Increasingly, children's views are sought. This enables them to contribute more fully to the life of the school. For example, their views were sought recently concerning the school's vision and values. This has led to a draft vision and values being embedded which children understand more easily.
- In the most effective practice, teachers seek out and take account of children's views about what they would like to learn. This helps children to have increased ownership of their learning. Almost all teachers share the purpose of learning well with children and most teachers involve children in identifying the success criteria for lessons. This helps children to be better informed about and aspirational in their learning. Teachers know children well and plan appropriate learning experiences. Across the school, teachers use a variety of teaching approaches to help children engage in lessons and increase their motivation. These include active learning, whole-class lessons, group and paired work.
- Most teachers use varied questioning techniques to check children's understanding and build on their prior learning. In a few observed lessons, staff used higher-order questioning to extend learning. The school should now take forward its plans to develop this good practice more consistently. All teachers provide children with a range of oral and written feedback to help them understand their progress in learning and how their work could improve. There is still some inconsistency in the quality of this feedback. Commendably, the learning environments,

including the school's corridors, are organised well and display a range of children's work. Teachers' feedback on this work is also displayed to support children in learning from others. The school plans to increase children's opportunity to learn outdoors.

- Teachers are becoming more confident about making judgements on children's progress due to their participation in ongoing moderation activities in the school, cluster and local authority. As a result of teachers' improved confidence in assessing children's progress, the school's attainment data is becoming more reliable. There is scope for the school to communicate and share its assessment strategies more regularly with parents. This will help parents to develop a better understanding about how their child's learning is being supported. Teachers use the local authority progression pathways for literacy and numeracy well to ensure children's learning is progressive and coherent. They should continue to extend this practice to other areas of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly to discuss children's progress. At these meetings, teachers make good use of the school's data to track children's progress and identify if and where targeted interventions could be used to support individual or groups of children's learning. Teachers also make effective use of data to support children's learning at key transition points, such as when children move from the early learning centre to the school. Interventions are planned appropriately and evaluated regularly. The school is using its Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to support children. This is beginning to have a positive impact on children's learning and engagement. For example, the school has placed an increased focus on supporting a number of families. This has led to better engagement between the school and home, and increased support for children.

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

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

- The overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Most children, including those requiring additional support with their learning, are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. The inspection team is confident that the data provided by the school illustrates children's progress accurately.
- The headteacher holds termly tracking meetings with class teachers to discuss children's progress. At these meetings, a wealth of evidence, including data, is analysed carefully to consider children's progress. Appropriate interventions are identified to address areas of concern. Interventions are also evaluated to consider their impact on raising attainment.

Literacy and English

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English is good. Data provided by the school in June 2018 showed that by the end of P1, most children achieved early level in reading, writing, and listening and talking. By the end of P4, the majority of children achieved first level in writing and most achieved first level in reading, and listening and talking. By the end of P7, the majority achieved second level in reading and writing and most achieved second level in listening and talking.
- Last session, in order to raise attainment and improve children's enjoyment in reading, the school focused on developing a reading culture. This continues to have a positive impact on children's engagement in reading in class, and staff's confidence in knowing and applying a range of reading strategies. Staff have identified correctly the need to improve and ensure greater consistency in children's writing over the coming session.

Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking across the school is good and most children are developing and applying their skills well across their learning. Most children listen attentively to teacher instructions and show respect when listening to their peers. At early level, almost all children engage in play-based learning, communicating well with their peers during role play and group tasks. At first level, the majority of children talk clearly when sharing their feelings, ideas and thoughts. They respond to instructions and ask questions confidently. At second level, most children can speak about their roles and responsibilities within the school. They articulate their views well and show awareness of their audience. A few children at all stages require further support to ensure they participate fully in class discussions.

Reading

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is good. Most children across the school enjoy reading a variety of appropriate texts. Children at first and second levels make personal choices of the books they want to read. At early level, most children are learning to identify common words and use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. They are beginning to use pictures and drawings to sequence simple texts and stories. Children who have achieved first level read a range of texts fluently and demonstrate expression and enjoyment when reading aloud. A few children are not confident yet in selecting and using strategies to help them make the meaning of texts clear. Children on track to achieve second level read fluently and show understanding of text and genre.

Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is good. At early level, children use a pencil with increasing confidence and they write well for enjoyment to describe detailed drawings they create. At first level, most children can start sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader and can spell commonly used words correctly. Teachers should continue to ensure all children at this level present their writing in a way that is attractive for the reader. Whilst the majority of children present work that is of a good or very good quality, there is some inconsistency in how work is presented across all classes. At second level, most children can create short and extended texts for a variety of purposes. They link sentences well using a range of connectives. A few children at second level are competent in using introductions to make their topics clear and conclusions to round off their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children, including those requiring additional support with their learning, are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics as they move through the school. Increased moderation activities have helped teachers to develop a better understanding of standards and are having a positive impact on children's attainment.

Number and number processes

- Most children are skilled in using a range of strategies to perform calculations. At early level, most children are developing skills in counting the number of objects in a group to ten. At first level, the majority of children can round whole numbers to the nearest ten and 100 and identify correctly the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. Most children are developing recall of table facts well. At second level, almost all children are able to estimate and round numbers accurately and most children demonstrate good knowledge of place value to 1,000,000 and fractions. They also convert equivalent forms of common fractions to decimals confidently.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children understand and use the language of position and direction correctly, including in front, behind, above, below, forwards and backwards. At first level, children identify symmetry in patterns, pictures, nature and two-dimensional shapes. At second level, most children can discuss properties of a range of angles and identify angles in the environment. They can draw angles, including right, acute and obtuse. They identify and describe two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects accurately.

Information handling

- At first level most children can answer questions to extract key information from a variety of data sets, including charts and tables. At second level, almost all children are able to collect, organise and display data accurately in a variety of ways. They are also able to analyse,

interpret and draw conclusions from a range of data with ease. Children at second level are developing their knowledge of probability and chance. Most children require further experiences in this area to apply their skills in a range of contexts.

Attainment over time

- Attainment data was provided by the school for literacy and numeracy over the last two years. The school is not yet in a position to provide similar data for other curriculum areas. The school recognises that its data is becoming more reliable as teachers develop confidence in making robust professional judgements about achievement of a level.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children are developing well across the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence through a wide range of opportunities provided by staff and partners. These include residential trips, school groups, such as Eco-Schools Scotland and Rights Respecting Schools, the pupil council, and 'Responsibility Fridays'. Children speak positively about the team-building and leadership skills they have gained from attending residential trips. Children's achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways. This is helping children to feel valued, contributing to the positive ethos in the school. The children are proud of their Scottish Enterprise Award and their five Eco-Schools Scotland 'green flags'.
- A next step for the school will be to track children's participation in out-of-class activities. This will help to build the skills of all children and ensure no child misses out on important learning.

Equity for all learners

- The school is continuing to develop its tracking system. This is helping senior leaders and staff to evaluate children's progress on an ongoing basis and plan appropriate interventions to meet individual needs effectively. Good use is made of a range of partners to help raise the attainment of all learners, including the most vulnerable. This includes speech and language therapists working closely with groups of children to identify any gaps in their learning and plan and implement strategies to help them take the next steps in their learning.
- Senior leaders evaluate PEF plans continuously to ensure they are having a positive impact on children's attainment and achievement. PEF interventions, which include more-structured work with children's families, are beginning to lead to improved outcomes for children. These include better attendance and more consistent engagement in learning.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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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