

Summarised inspection findings

Ancrum Road Primary School

Dundee City Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Ancrum Road is a non-denominational primary school in the Harris Academy cluster, situated in the west of Dundee. It first opened in 1876 and many of the original features remain.

At the time of the inspection there were 367 pupils on the roll, organised into 15 classes. The headteacher has been in post for four and a half years. The substantive depute was on a career break, so an acting depute headteacher and principal teacher were in post. Over half of the school roll live in SIMD 1-3.

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

- There is a very positive school ethos, which is underpinned by respectful and caring relationships between almost all children and staff, and amongst most children. Most staff encourage children to do the best that they can. The school's vision, values and aims are evident, in the ways that people relate to one another and on displays throughout the school. Staff refer to the school values regularly during class discussions and assemblies to support children's wellbeing.
- Most children enjoy learning at Ancrum Road Primary School. Almost all children have a good attitude to their learning and work purposefully in class. During the inspection, a few children were not engaged fully in their learning, displaying very low-level challenging behaviour. They would have benefited from support to help them to engage.
- Most children are able to talk appropriately about their learning. They can articulate what they are good at, and they are beginning to identify accurately their next steps in learning. Most children would benefit from having more defined learning targets across the curriculum. A few children are able to speak very confidently about their learning. Teachers seek children's views about aspects of their learning in most classes. However, they should take increased account of children's views, letting children know that they are doing this, as they continue to develop approaches to improving learning, teaching and assessment across the school.
- At all stages, almost all children are able to work at their own pace. This helps them to feel supported in, and motivated by, their learning. Most teachers ensure that all children experience appropriate challenge in their learning. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. A few children would benefit from learning at a faster pace. In a few classes, teachers need to have higher expectations of children's learning and the ways in which they present their work. There is scope for children to learn more independently to build their confidence and sense of responsibility. Most children who require additional support with their learning receive good support in classes from pupil support staff. The headteacher has also developed a wide range of strong partnerships which support children's learning and wellbeing, especially those facing disadvantage.

- Most children's learning is enhanced well through the use of digital technologies. Children use laptops and electronic tablets regularly to learn a variety of digital skills, including word-processing and using spreadsheets. In addition they use digital software in classes. This motivates them by helping them to apply their learning in new contexts. It also challenges and deepens their learning. Through volunteering to become 'digital leaders', older children provide useful support to younger children to develop their digital skills.
- Almost all teachers give clear explanations to children, and most teachers use questioning well to enhance children's understanding about their learning. In a few classes, teachers need to make better use of questioning to help children explore their thinking more fully. Most teachers use a range of feedback well to support children's learning.
- Across the school, teachers use their classroom environments consistently well to support children's learning. Learning walls are helpful, and children's work is displayed attractively. Teachers use other environments to provide targeted learning experiences and support for a few children, such as the kitchen and snug. The kitchen is being used to pilot universal skills in cookery and nutrition, as well as developing communication and teamwork. Teachers also make good use of the outdoors and open spaces to provide valuable learning experiences for children. These are linked to sports and numeracy, and yoga.
- Most teachers use a variety of assessment information to help them understand children's progress, and intervene appropriately when children require additional support to achieve successfully. This information includes standardised assessment data, assessments of planned pieces of work, and general classroom observation feedback. Self-assessment and peer-assessment strategies are used effectively by most teachers to help children develop a better understanding of their learning and the learning of their peers. Good arrangements for moderation, both within school and with improvement partnership and cluster schools, are in place to support teachers' confidence in professional judgements. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to develop and use assessments which capture more effectively children's learning across different experiences and outcomes. This will help children to apply their learning in different contexts, and help teachers and parents to understand children's learning more effectively over time.
- Teachers plan termly for literacy, numeracy and health and well-being. They also plan interdisciplinary learning contexts and experiences. Regular attainment meetings between the senior leadership team and all teachers are helpful in discussing children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children requiring additional support with their learning, including those who face barriers due to their socio-economic background are also identified. Teachers plan relevant interventions for individuals and groups of children who require additional support. These are reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to have a positive impact on children's progress. Senior leaders should continue to develop the effectiveness of approaches to monitor and track the progress of all children, to inform decisions about learning, teaching and meeting children's needs. They believe the local authority's development of a management information tool will support this process. Moving forward, teachers should build on current arrangements for moderation to ensure that there is a shared understanding of standards and expectations. This will help them make confident professional judgements about how well children are progressing.
- Across the school, learning, teaching and assessment is variable. Senior leaders recognise that a next step will be to develop a more consistent understanding amongst all staff of what high quality practice in this area looks like in Ancrum Road Primary School. It should focus on effective pedagogy, and draw on strong practice which is evident across the school.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The school's most recent collection of predicted data on Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels shows that that by the end of P1, most children are expected to achieve the appropriate level in listening and talking, reading, writing, and mathematics and numeracy. By the end of P4, most children are expected to achieve the appropriate level in reading, writing, and listening and talking. The majority are expected to achieve the appropriate level in numeracy and mathematics. By the end of P7, most children are expected to achieve the appropriate level in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy and mathematics.
- As a result of a range of inspection activity, the inspection team concludes that the majority of children could be making better progress in their learning, and achieving higher standards. They are not yet secure enough in their learning to apply the range of skills and knowledge within a level in a range of contexts.

Attainment in literacy

- Overall most children are making good progress in literacy, however this is not consistent across all stages.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children speak confidently and articulately, and listen and respond well to each other and adults. They work in pairs and in groups, and this is having a positive impact on their skills in listening and talking. At early level most children listen well to explanations and information. They are developing their awareness of when to talk and when to listen. At first level most children can take turns in group discussions, making appropriate contributions. They can identify the main ideas from texts and share their ideas with others. At second level most children engage very respectfully with others, and share their enthusiasm for reading by describing their favourite genre and authors. They need to develop further their discussion and debating skills.

Reading

- Most children across the school are keen readers and engage well with a wide variety of texts. They speak confidently about why they have chosen a text and their preference in relation to different authors. Children in Primary 2 and 7 participate regularly in paired reading, which is having a positive impact on their reading for enjoyment. At early level, most children can identify common words, and use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. At first level most children are enthusiastic readers. They read with fluency and increasing expression, and have strategies to read unfamiliar words. They engage well with a range of texts and are able to share thoughts about characters and settings, as well as the main idea of the text. They can answer literal and inferential questions about texts, and can discuss a range of authors and explain why they like them. At second level most children are reading a wide variety of

texts. They can select and sort information from a range of sources, making notes to show an understanding of a topic or issue. They can discuss features of language, for example sentence structure and punctuation, and explain how authors use a range of techniques to create suspense encouraging the reader to read on.

Writing

- Across the school children write in a variety of genre. At early level most children can form lower case letters legibly. The majority attempt to spell words correctly and to write a sentence using a capital letter and full stop. At first level, most children are developing their understanding of sentence structure and use conjunctions and basic punctuation. They start sentences in a variety of ways and write for a variety of purposes. At second level most children use appropriate vocabulary to convey thoughts and feelings when developing characters and settings. They use vocabulary well for specific purposes when creating texts in a variety of contexts, including the use of rhetorical questions and emotive language in persuasive writing. They can also use similes and metaphors appropriately to enhance their writing. Most children self-assess their writing confidently against success criteria, and feedback from the class teachers also helps children 'up level' their writing. Across the school, there is a need to improve the quality of children's writing.

Numeracy and Mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy although this is not consistent across all stages.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children are able to identify and recognise numbers from 0 to 20 with confidence. They have a good understanding of fractions and are able to split a whole into smaller parts. They can also use simple addition and subtraction, using coins to pay for items. Across first and second level, most children have a good understanding of place value and how to calculate number problems efficiently. Children need to develop their skills in explaining their thinking to their peers and teachers. Teachers recognise that further work is required on fractions, decimals and percentages as children do not yet have a full understanding of the relationship between all three. At second level, children need to revisit measurement. Across the school, children's skills in mental agility are improving. Most can identify and use different mental strategies to complete calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- At both early and first level, children are not confident in describing common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At upper stages of the school, children have created their own shapes and objects, and are able to discuss their properties. At second level, children need further practice to support their progress in shape, position and movement. Children were unable to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and notation.

Information handling

- At early level, most children can collect objects and ask questions to gather information, organise and display findings in different ways. This needs to be extended at first level, so that children can improve their progress in displaying data in real-life contexts. At second level, children carry out surveys and present information in different ways. Children are not always able to apply their knowledge and understanding from across the numeracy organisers in different contexts.

Attainment over time

- Overall, there has been an increase in attainment across all organisers of literacy and numeracy over the last three years across the school. Particular dips in performance at

selected stages have been identified. The headteacher acknowledges that to raise attainment even further a continued focus on effective pedagogy is required.

- There is a strategic overview in place which allows senior leaders to identify children who are on track to achieve expected CfE levels. Teachers are asked to report on progress towards achievement of a level at three different intervals over the course of a year using a simple rating system. Analysis of this indicates improvements in performance over the course of the year.
- Effective approaches are in place to monitor closely the attainment of children across deciles as a means to identify the poverty related attainment gap in the school. At each stage of the school, there is a clear indication of improving performance of children in SIMD one and two compared to those in deciles three to ten.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children's achievements are promoted through home/school booklets related to developing the four capacities of CfE. This includes a range of progressive challenges which include good opportunities for family learning. There is a good range of after school clubs and activities on offer, including a bridge club and a variety of sports clubs. As a result, children are developing a range of skills for learning, life and work. A highly successful music initiative is supporting all children in Primary 5 to learn a musical instrument, and children enjoy performing in the school orchestra. As well as improving relationships and behaviour, this is developing important skills in listening and concentrating as well as perseverance and resilience. Children enjoy a range of opportunities to participate in the life and work of the school in other ways. For example, through involvement in the pupil council, as peer mediators and digital leaders. This is developing valuable citizenship and leadership skills, as well as improving the confidence of those involved.
- Teachers track children's achievements in and out of school. These are widely celebrated through social media and at assemblies. We have discussed with senior leaders how they can develop approaches to tracking children's achievements further. In particular, teachers should help children to make links between the skills they are developing through achievement opportunities and the world of work. As planned, teachers should continue to develop approaches to learner participation across all stages of the school.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher's commitment to creating a socially inclusive environment, and her strong belief in equity of experience for all learners is a real strength. Over the last three years, there is clear evidence of identified children, who face significant barriers to their learning, making progress to reduce gaps in their attainment and achievement. Senior leaders provide resources and minimise the financial cost of learning experiences to bring about greater equity. This is well supported by the parent community who are instrumental in fundraising to pay the cost of transport. Commendably there have been no exclusions this session, and attendance is in line with national averages.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's partnership with Dundee City Council is providing every child in Primary 5 with the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, and to play in the school orchestra. There are many benefits to this valuable work. Children are developing their ability to cooperate with others, and this is supporting the promotion of positive relationships and behaviour across the school. Children are also developing listening and concentration skills, and improving perseverance and resilience. This is supporting them to make better progress in their learning in class. All children are offered the opportunity to continue to play an instrument in Primary 6. This session there was over 100% increased uptake of this opportunity compared with previous years.

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.