

Summarised inspection findings

Arngask Primary School and Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

11 September 2018

Key contextual information

Arngask Primary School and nursery class serves the village of Glenfarg in Perth and Kinross Council. At the time of the inspection, there were 83 children in the school arranged into four multi-stage composite classes. There were an additional 24 children in the nursery class.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

very good

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:

- collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- Under the very effective leadership of the headteacher, the school uses a range of approaches to involve staff, parents and children in self-evaluation to identify areas for further improvement. The school makes good use of surveys and 'exit passes' to gather parental views. This session there has been a focus on encouraging parents to take a stronger part in school improvement. For example, a number of parents have participated in focus groups on developing the school curriculum and on the use of children's 'learning journey' jotters. Feedback from the parent focus group on the learning journey jotters is being taken forward this session.
- The headteacher listens to stakeholders' views and makes good use of these to make further improvements in the school. The school sets out its priorities for improvement in the school improvement plan. The plan is regularly reviewed and updated as necessary to include new, or revised, national and local priorities. Parents receive very good communication about the work of the school and its improvements through, for example, newsletter, social media updates.
- A number of local groups, including Glenfarg in Bloom and the local poetry group link with the school and enhance children's experiences. The headteacher recognises that a wider range of partners could be included more effectively in the school's self-evaluation and improvement journey. She is developing methods to consult with a wider range of stakeholders and planning take forward opportunities to link with a greater range of local community partners which will further enhance children's learning experiences.
- Children have a strong voice in their school. There are many meaningful opportunities for them to influence the on-going work of the school and help to make further improvements. All children are members of one of the six 'pupil voice' groups. These set termly goals and action plans for school improvement. Working through the action plans provides a helpful range of opportunities for children to develop leadership skills and skills for life, learning and work.
- The way children are very actively involved in understanding and evaluating their own learning is a major strength of the school. Children are able to use the language of learning, and the curriculum, to identify and set their own targets to improve their progress. The whole-school

commitment to a clear visual planning approach, using the apple tree metaphor, works exceptionally well to help children understand and have a genuine ownership of their own learning.

- All staff are committed to, and engaged in, self-evaluation for on-going school improvement. They provide, overall, high quality learning experiences for children and respond to their learning needs. Staff work together very well to share expertise and develop their practice. Teachers have focused on improving consistency in learning and teaching across the school. They have reflected on this through carrying out learning walks and undertaking moderation of children's learning journey jotters. Staff make very good use of the quality indicators in How Good is Our School? and the General Teaching Council Standards to review progress of school improvement outcomes and their own responsibility, and involvement, in these improvements.
- Teachers' Career-long Professional Learning (CLPL) is well planned. It takes account of professional review and development arrangements and linked to the school improvement plan. This has resulted in staff being given very good opportunities to develop and lead on a range of aspects of school improvement. As part of commitment to CLPL, staff engage in professional reading to enhance their knowledge of up-to-date research on learning.
- The school's very good annual quality assurance approaches ensure that there is a clear focus on reviewing children's progress. The headteacher visits classes to observe learning. She has regular planned discussions with teachers about the progress of individual children. A range of data and information is used to track children's attainment and achievement using the local authority's tracking spread-sheets. Staff and the headteacher sample children's work and analyse a range of assessment data to challenge and support children in their learning. As a result of this analysis, well-targeted support for individual children is put in place. This includes the targeted support groups which have been introduced to support children from P3 to P7 to make progress in numeracy.
- Teachers work together, and with a neighbouring school, to moderate standards in children's progress. They make moderation visits across both schools and observe learning and teaching. This contributes to teachers using national benchmarks with increasing confidence to assess children's progress. Teachers have developed a three-year programme of planned learning in social subjects, science and technologies along with their partner school. The headteacher supports staff well to develop holistic assessments to support their planning.
- The school's approaches to self-evaluation focuses on improving children's successes and achievements. This focus has developed a consistent approach to planning and making planning visual and accessible. As a result, children have a real understanding of their own learning and teachers have broadened children's learning experiences.

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. 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

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

- Overall, almost all learners are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Children's progress is tracked rigorously by the headteacher. This enables staff to identify any gaps and to provide early intervention to close learning gaps. The school provided data on attainment gathered through professional judgement, supported by a range of standardised assessment. Most children are attaining expected levels, or better, in national standards. Staff have had professional development in moderation activities which has improved their confidence in identifying what is 'achievement of a level'. As staff confidence has grown there has been increased consistency in approaches to planning and evaluation of learning. This is already having a positive impact on children's attainment. The apple tree system of planning termly work and recording achieved targets works very well. Children talk confidently about their learning and know their next steps in learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making very good progress in literacy and English from their previous levels of learning. At all stages, almost all children achieve expected national attainment levels in listening and talking and reading. In writing, almost all children in P1 and P7, and most in P4 achieve expected national standards. Across the school, children who experience difficulties in making progress are helped to improve by a range of well-targeted support strategies.
- Staff increasingly use consistent approaches to planning learning activities to provide children with high quality experiences. This includes incorporating drama and story-telling into lessons. Teachers at all stages now use agreed strategies to teach writing and this gives children structured approaches to planning and improving their writing. The school is successfully using the context of staging the school production to involve all children from P3-P7. This has enhanced all aspects of their work in literacy.

Listening and Talking

- Children attain very well in listening and talking across the school. In all classes, children listen very well. They respond to each other, and to adults, in a friendly and respectful manner. Almost all children at the early level listen very well to their teacher and show a genuine interest in learning. At the first and second levels, children listen well to each other

and they confidently build on one another's' contributions. Children at all stages work well together in small groups, sharing ideas and collaborating on tasks.

Reading

- Overall, at all stages, children enjoy reading and use the reading skills they have learned to support progress across their learning in other curriculum areas. At the early level, children are making very good progress in developing reading skills. They recognise letters and common words and are beginning to read independently with confidence. Children who have achieved first level, read aloud with very good expression and understanding. Almost all children who have attained first level say that they enjoy reading for pleasure. Children at second level make good use of class library books and the internet to carry out research on their learning across the curriculum. They are fluent, independent readers. Most describe themselves as keen, regular readers. The school should now look for strategies to further develop children's love of reading. Children enjoy active engagement with texts beyond novels and short stories including play scripts and poetry.

Writing

- Attainment in writing across the school is very good. Children are given regular opportunities in all classes to write at length, for a variety of purposes in a variety of contexts. At early level, they are making very good progress in learning to write sentences. They use their knowledge of sounds and letters to increasingly spell correctly. Children at the early level respond well when they are given active learning experiences to develop their literacy skills. Children who have achieved first level are enthusiastic about writing a range of stories and poetry. Staging the school production has enthused children working at first level to write their own short play scripts. By the end of the second level, almost all children are able to create a range of extended texts for different purposes. These include fairy tales and fact files. Children confidently tackle these different genres and use appropriate punctuation and spelling in their writing. Across the school, children work well to improve their writing by acting on feedback from their teachers and also from their peers. The presentation of written work across the school is of a good standard and children produce good quality work linked to their learning in different curricular areas.

Attainment in mathematics and numeracy

- Current practice in numeracy is providing children with very good opportunities to develop numeracy and mathematics skills across learning. Pupils in P3-7 have a shared context for learning this term to develop numeracy and enterprise skills. Data collected from targeted support groups in numeracy shows a positive impact on pupils' confidence. Almost all children feel challenged in their groups and talk confidently about their learning.
- Numeracy is developed through most areas of the curriculum and children talk about the relevance of their mathematics and numeracy work in real-life applications. A few children are unsure of correct mathematical terms although they talk with confidence about the processes. Staff have identified this as a priority in the school improvement plan and should continue to reinforce the language of learning. In all observed lessons learning intentions were linked to targets on the apple tree and discussed with children. There was agreement of success criteria and how pupils know if they are on target.

Number, money and measurement

- Children working at early level confidently use their number skills. They use practical resources and mental strategies to count numbers of objects. They count to 20 and back. They recognise some number patterns and are beginning to count in 2s, 5s and 10s. They add two and three numbers on a horizontal layout, adding and subtracting within 20. Children working within first level understand the concept of place value within hundreds, tens and units. They demonstrate knowledge of the importance of the place value of zero. They use strategies to estimate and answer using non-standard units and then check accuracy using standard units of centimetres and metres. Most use correct vocabulary when discussing the four basic operations. They demonstrate knowledge of fractions using concrete objects and name correctly fifths, quarters, sixths and eighths. A few children are developing knowledge of simple equivalent fractions. At second level, children can round numbers to 100,000. They have good knowledge of rounding up and understand concept of estimation. They partition whole numbers and decimal fractions. They multiply and divide up to 10 times table. Children understand place value to two decimal places. Across the school children are developing skills in managing money through a range of appropriate activities and experiences. At early and first level children enjoy counting money to buy objects in the class shop and calculate change. At second level, they understand profit and loss relating this to enterprise work and activities.
- Staging the school production as a whole-school context for learning provides children with many opportunities to work with numeracy across all areas of the curriculum. This includes measurement using standard and non-standard units of measure to calculate floor space for seating and stage furniture. Children confidently demonstrate the skills they have learned.

Shape position and movement

- Children working at early and first levels recognise circles, squares and cubes. They sort and describe various 2D shapes according to properties such as shapes that roll, slide, and balance. Most recognise 3D objects. They categorise the shapes and objects according to surfaces such as flat, round, straight. Children use correctly the directional language such as front, back, above, below, backwards and forwards. At second level, most children use specific mathematical vocabulary such as diagonal, radius and circumference to describe 3D objects. Outdoor learning allows the children to look for these shapes in the environment and to investigate and discuss their use. Children have sound knowledge of angles and recognise and describe acute, obtuse and reflex. They measure and draw angles and relate this to link to compass points. At first and second level children understand scale in relation to maps or plans. This links to set design in staging the school production.

Information handling

- At early and first levels children draw simple diagram tables to display information and data. They describe important features of the data for example when calculating how many children walked to school or cycled to school. At second level, children investigate most appropriate ways of collecting data and displaying this information to give accurate findings. This is linked to their activities on chance and probability. Most children at this level can understand and use correctly the vocabulary of chance. This includes equal chance, percentage chance, fifty-fifty. Children would benefit from more opportunities to use a wider range of media including digital tools to display and explain data.

Attainment over time

- The school's rigorous monitoring and tracking data shows that almost all learners make very good progress from their previous level of attainment in both literacy and numeracy. The dip in numeracy in 2016 was identified and explained by the school. Strategies which were put into place had a positive impact and the attainment figures for that cohort have improved greatly. Inspection activities such as class observations, discussion with staff, monitoring of learning wall displays and children's jotter work, evidence the validity of staff predictions. This was reinforced during focus groups conversations with the articulate and confident children.
- There is evidence of children's progress and appropriate pace and challenge for every child. Tracking processes are deployed with consistency across all classes and focus on learning attained, identified next steps and predicted attainment timescales. Children who are not making the anticipated progress are identified and their experiences carefully analysed to identify what support can be made.
- Moderation activities, involvement of teaching staff in teacher-learner communities and recent staff stability are all working well to improve outcomes for learners. There has been measurable improvement in attainment for learners across the school. The school should continue to maintain and increase the present very good levels of attainment.

Overall Quality of Learner's achievement

- All staff know children and families well and Arngask primary school offers children many wide-ranging opportunities for personal achievement. There is an accreditation system of achievement for all, and achievements in each of the four capacities in Curriculum for Excellence are recorded to ensure progression in skills. Throughout the school, learners experience a wide range of opportunities to help them develop confidence and self-esteem and this enables them to develop further their personal interests. Children's achievements are celebrated and they record their achievements in and out of school in their achievement folders. Learners develop leadership skills through responsibilities of house and vice captains, pupil voice group leaders, buddies, junior administrators and in planning and leading lunchtime clubs.
- Children's voice is strong across all school activities including planning and evaluating their own learning. All learning journey jotters are of a high standard and reflect accurately children's progression through the curriculum. They are monitored and discussed with the headteacher and are sent home termly for parents and children to discuss and comment on the work. This has informed collegiate discussion leading to an agreed focus on making pupil targets more specific to ensure they are clearer for children and parents. Pupils develop their understanding of the four capacities through a range of enterprise opportunities where skills development is explicit and related to world of work. Parents and local community members come to school to talk about their work and the skills involved in their jobs. Citizenship skills are developed through a range of charity work organised by the pupil-fundraising committee. The school has been awarded four Eco Green Flags and children are enthusiastic about working for their fifth flag. The school's inclusion values are supported by the work which is being developed to gain Rights Respecting School accreditation

Equity for all learners

- Staff know all the children and families well. Any barriers to learning are quickly identified and intervention programmes are put into place. Children facing challenges in some curriculum areas benefit from a rich and broad experience. The school has used its Pupil Equity Funding to ensure no child misses out on learning experiences, including school residential trips. It has also purchased active literacy materials and professional reading materials for staff. Attendance figures are high and there have been no exclusions in last six years. Children are rightly proud of their school and are confident that they have a strong and important voice in school.

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.