

Summarised inspection findings

Ferryden Primary School

Angus Council

26 March 2024

Key contextual information

Ferryden Primary School and Nursery Class is located in the village of Ferryden in Montrose, Angus Council. The school roll is 149 children working across seven classes. A number of children attend the school following a placing request.

The headteacher has been in post since August 2020. A depute head teacher leads and manages the nursery class. The school has a total of 9.1 full-time equivalent teaching (FTE) staff, including an additional support needs teacher. The school has 3 FTE support for learning assistants.

Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles five and six. In school session 2023-2024, the school received £24,500 of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Almost all children have English as a first language. Seventeen percent of children require additional support with their learning. In school session 2022-2023, attendance was in line with the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last three years.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- All staff have created a very nurturing ethos across the school which is underpinned by children's rights. Staff use the well embedded values of 'successful, kind, prepared, positive and independent' to develop very positive relationships with children. As a result, children interact positively with each other and adults. They greet visitors confidently and listen respectfully to others in class discussions. Children enjoy supporting and encouraging each other in all aspects of school life and their learning to be 'the very best version of themselves'.
- Across the school, all staff create calm and purposeful climates for learning. They have high expectations and aspirations for all children. Staff have developed and created highly motivating learning spaces indoors and outdoors. Children experience quality outdoor learning regularly and talk positively about their engagement and participation in these experiences. For example, they enjoy growing food in the garden area and are currently building a school pond. This is helping them to have a firm understanding of sustainability. All staff should continue to develop approaches to delivering progressive outdoor learning experiences. In doing this, they should support children to understand the skills they develop through these experiences.
- In all classes, teachers enrich and extend children's learning through highly effective use of digital technologies. Children develop their computing science skills progressively as they move through the school. Children use a range of digital applications and shared digital platforms successfully. Teachers use digital collaboration tools skilfully to gather pupil views and opinions for a range of purposes. For example, they check for children's understanding to

inform next steps in learning. Children receive useful feedback digitally which helps them to identify what they need to do to improve. Teachers use digital technology well to remove barriers to learning and support children who require additional support with their learning.

- A play-based approach to learning is firmly embedded in P1. Teachers motivate and encourage children in their play experiences well. They are very responsive to the interests and needs of children, capturing their views and engagement in activities in floor books and learning walls. Children experience learning that is enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests in a well organised, stimulating learning environment. They interact very well with each other and demonstrate increasing confidence in working independently. Staff are well-placed to develop approaches to learning through play throughout the school.
- Almost all teachers use a wide range of creative teaching approaches. They provide children with enjoyable tasks and activities. Almost all children are attentive throughout lessons and are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. This is a key strength. Children have a meaningful voice in planning their learning which increases their motivation. Children share what they already know and what they would like to learn more about. They also have worthwhile choices in how they learn.
- In almost all classes, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions in very well organised and structured lessons. They set lessons at a brisk pace and children work well together in pairs and groups. Teachers use a consistent approach to support children to understand the purpose of their learning and what they need to do to be successful. All teachers provide children with written and verbal feedback that is linked to the purpose of learning. This supports children very well to understand their strengths and next steps in learning.
- Almost all teachers plan learning to support and challenge children. Teachers use a 'must, could and should' approach to give children choice in the level of difficulty of their work. Pupil support assistants provide practical and valuable help to children when they need it. This is helping to meet the needs of most learners. A few children would benefit from more demanding work. Teachers should continue to ensure all learning experiences provide appropriate levels of challenge. This will help all children to make the best possible progress.
- Most children use peer and self-assessment strategies confidently to measure their success in learning. Building on this, teachers should provide children with more opportunities to set individual targets. Teachers have recently introduced a shared language to help children understand the skills they are developing through their learning. As planned, teachers should continue to develop these approaches.
- Across the school, staff demonstrate a strong ethos of teamwork. Senior leaders support staff very well to develop effective, consistent approaches to planning children's learning. Teachers make good use of local authority and school progression pathways to plan children's learning. They evaluate the impact of learning on children's progress and attainment carefully. This is helping teachers to ensure they identify children's next steps and build upon what children already know.
- Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to providing high-quality learning and teaching. Senior leaders and teachers have developed useful guidance to support teachers to improve their

practice. For example, they have created a guidance template which outlines the features of a high-quality numeracy lesson. Teachers use this guidance well to observe each other and identify key features of strong practice. As a result, teachers demonstrate consistent whole school approaches to high-quality learning and teaching. This is a major strength. Teachers have implemented new approaches to teaching reading following a small test of change based on educational research. They can demonstrate the added value of this approach on children's attainment.

- Teachers use an assessment calendar successfully to plan assessment across the year for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use standardised tests and teacher created assessments effectively to evaluate children's progress in learning. As a result, teachers hold valid information about children's progress over time. This is helping them to track children's individual progress towards achieving Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to develop assessment approaches across a broader range of curriculum areas.
- Teachers use the 'Ferryden Primary School Moderation Cycle' effectively to moderate approaches to planning, delivering and assessing children's learning. They also analyse evidence of children's progress in literacy and numeracy with cluster schools. Teachers are developing well their shared expectations of national standards, robust tracking and monitoring of children's attainment using national Benchmarks. Senior leaders should continue to develop approaches to moderation. This should help to ensure teachers' judgements about children's learning and achievements are robust across all curricular areas.
- Teachers plan children's learning across all curricular areas using the experiences and outcomes of CfE. They plan children's learning progressively and ensure children receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Senior leaders support staff well to use data to identify children's strengths and next steps. Teachers complete a local authority tracking tool prior to discussions three times a year with senior leaders about children's progress and attainment. They identify children who need additional support or challenge during these tracking meetings. Staff plan specific and measurable interventions for children who require additional support with their learning or those impacted by factors relating to poverty. As a result, children receive learning that is well matched to their needs.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. For session 2022-2023, most children achieved national standards in reading, listening and talking and numeracy. The majority of children achieved national standards in writing. Across the school there are a few children who are working ahead of expected levels of attainment.
- Most children who require additional support in their learning make good progress towards identified targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Most children at early level talk about their favourite stories and recite poetry successfully. At first level, almost all children discuss accurately the features of plot, character and setting in texts. They explain confidently the meaning of a range of Scots vocabulary. At second level, almost all children understand clearly the features of presentation skills such as eye contact or tone of voice. Children at second level would benefit from opportunities to engage in debates to build their listening and talking skills further.

Reading

- Across the school, there is a positive reading culture. Children participate in reading challenges and borrow books from the school library. As a result, almost all children are keen readers and discuss confidently their favourite authors and books. Most children working at early level recognise individual sounds and use this knowledge to read simple words. At first level, most children read aloud with fluency and expression using their knowledge of sight vocabulary and punctuation. At second level, most children explain the features of different genres and answer accurately a range of inferential questions in texts. At first and second levels, most children know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts but are less confident in describing the features of these.

Writing

- At early level, most children write to convey different ideas, messages and information during imaginative play and real-life contexts. They create detailed drawings to share stories and feelings. Children would benefit from more opportunities to practice letter formation. At first level, most children use successfully relevant vocabulary according to the context. For example, they know that short sentences add interest to suspense stories. At second level, most children use paragraphs accurately to organise their writing. They write non-fiction

newspaper reports using appropriate formats. At first and second level, children would benefit from more opportunities to create non-fiction texts.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, children would benefit from revisiting numerical and mathematical concepts regularly throughout the year.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children recognise numbers to 20 counting forwards and backwards successfully. They would benefit from more opportunities to practise forming numbers. At first level, most children use their knowledge of place value to subtract tens and hundreds from three-digit numbers. They calculate accurately change from £10 and are beginning to solve multi-part calculations using money. Most children at second level calculate durations of time on digital and analogue clocks. At second level, children would benefit from more opportunities to practice and record written multiplication and division calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children can name common two-dimensional shapes. They would benefit from more opportunities to work with a range of three-dimensional objects. Most children at first level name a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are developing well their understanding of the properties of three-dimensional objects. At second level, most children understand the relationship between the radius and diameter of a circle. They can successfully measure and draw a range of angles using a protractor.

Information handling

- Most children at early level interpret information from a simple pictograph to answer questions. Most children at first level use successfully Venn and Carroll diagrams to organise information. Most children at second level use a range of charts to sort and interpret information. At second level, children would benefit from using digital technology to create and display data in a range of graphs and charts.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has a clear strategy to raise attainment over time through robust planning and monitoring of children's learning. Children's attainment increases as they move through the school. Teachers use the national Benchmarks effectively combined with valid assessment data to make increasingly accurate professional judgements about children's progress and attainment.
- Senior leaders and staff track children's progress over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing carefully. They also track the progress of specific groups, individuals and cohorts. Senior leaders and teachers are developing well their analysis of data to have a clear picture of individual children's and year groups' attainment. The headteacher recognises a next step is for staff to further analyse this data to determine the progress of specific groups and cohorts. This will help them to determine the interventions that have the biggest impact on closing children's identified gaps.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are shared and celebrated across the school on display boards and on the school's online platform. Children really enjoy receiving 'Above and Beyond' certificates and house points for their successes. Children are very proud of the school's achievements such as a gold award for sports and winning a local netball tournament. Almost all children

develop successfully their teamworking and sporting skills through participation in a wide range of sports clubs.

- Children enjoy growing their own food in the school grounds and have a good understanding of sustainability. They demonstrate responsibility through risk assessing hazards successfully during outdoor learning.
- Children participate in a range of leadership groups and clubs. Children demonstrate their initiative by suggesting and leading their own clubs and willingly spend their breaks helping other children. Children also enjoy roles as house captains and sports captains. These groups support children well to develop confidence and be effective contributors.
- Staff track children's achievements inside and outside of school. They encourage children who may be at risk of missing out to join in clubs and groups. Staff are beginning to track clearly the skills children develop through their achievements. As a next step they should support children to discuss the skills they are developing.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and all staff have a very detailed knowledge of children and their families. They work closely with the Parent Council to subsidise school trips and events to ensure that children are included in all activities. Children have a clear understanding of the needs of others. They participate in a range of fundraising activities such as the termly 'Community Café' to fundraise for a school in Malawi. Children are developing their understanding of diversity through learning about other faiths and cultures.
- Overall, children's levels of attendance are high. Senior leaders are pro-active when a child's attendance falls.
- Senior leaders use PEF to provide children with interventions in reading. There is clear evidence that this is accelerating the progress of targeted children. They also use PEF to fund interventions to support wellbeing and engagement working successfully with partners. The headteacher identifies the need to ensure that the 'added value' of all PEF interventions is measured clearly.

Other relevant evidence

- Children receive two hours of high-quality physical education every week.
- The headteacher informs parents about the use of PEF.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food in schools.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Ferryden Primary is situated on a small area of land where outdoor areas are mainly concrete. Senior leaders and staff made improvements to the school grounds to provide children with engaging outdoor spaces where they can learn in creative ways. Senior leaders developed strong partnerships with agencies to support staff in delivering outdoor learning.

The school now has 'The Swan Den', a poly tunnel with specific learning zones and a school garden. There is also a fire pit with outdoor seating where children have recently built a cob oven to make food and tell stories. More recently, children have created a pond area with a wildlife garden. Children have a deeper understanding of sustainable development goals which is supporting them well to be responsible citizens and effective contributors. Children grow a range of crops to learn about the cycle of planting, growing, harvesting and cooking different foods. This is helping to develop their skills for learning, life and work.

Teachers provide children with relevant and enjoyable learning experiences that link different areas of the curriculum. For example, children make learning links with numeracy, maths, literacy and science when growing food. The school has received several awards in recognition of this success.

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.