

# Summarised inspection findings

**Prestonpans Primary School**

East Lothian Council

30 November 2018

## Key contextual information

Prestonpans town is situated on the south coast of the Firth of Forth, ten miles east of Edinburgh. The school has children from Primary 4 to Primary 7, almost all of whom come from the local infant school. In session 2016/17, there were 12 classes and the school roll was 334. In 2017/18 the school roll was 367 and there were 14 classes. This is expected to rise to 405 in session 2018/19.

### 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

**satisfactory**

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 emphasizes 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

- Staff throughout Prestonpans Primary School are committed to improvement, engaging in collegiate discussions on whole-school development. Staff are confident in offering their opinions on the work of the school and how it could improve. These discussions are now beginning to determine next steps to identify priorities for improvement. Children and Parent Council members are also given opportunities to contribute to school improvement, predominantly through pupil council surveys and questionnaires. Children are beginning to contribute their ideas. The wider body of parents is not yet involved in school improvement in any purposeful way. The headteacher should work with all stakeholders to gather more effectively the views of children and parents to establish improvement priorities. The headteacher has already made links with the infant school to improve coherence and consistency. This development should now be embedded in the work of the school.
- An improvement calendar put in place last session to support quality assurance across the school requires to be embedded more fully in the work of the school. There are plans in place to review it next session to include monitoring and tracking of children's progress. This will include learning and teaching observations, improved reports to parents, and monitoring the quality of children's work in jotters and workbooks. The senior leadership team needs to ensure that all self-evaluation activities are monitored rigorously to improve consistency of approach in learning and teaching to raise attainment for all children.
- The process of self-evaluation is not yet sufficiently explicit. It is dependent on limited information, predominantly the views of senior managers and school staff. Analysis of data and tracking and monitoring of children's progress in attainment and achievement should have a far more prominent role. This will help the school identify more consistently areas that require focused attention. The school's improvement priorities need to have an increased focus on the key issues currently facing the school, for example, raising attainment and achievement and continuing work started to review the behaviour management programme. The school has recently developed a podcast app that children populate. Its planned use with parents/carers and the wider community may improve communication with parents/carers.

- Teachers welcome opportunities to discuss their learning and teaching, and share good practice. The leadership team should now resume classroom observations with follow-up feedback as planned. Newly qualified teachers report that they feel well supported by senior managers and experienced colleagues. However, the quality of learning and teaching needs to be more consistent across the school to ensure attainment is improved.
- Senior managers are now in a position to undertake more systematic, rigorous monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching across the school to ensure there is sufficient pace and challenge for learners. A clear purpose for these visits should be established and evidence of follow-up actions and resulting impact captured.
- The school is at an early stage in tracking and monitoring children's progress in literacy and numeracy in a meaningful way. Staff are starting to measure progress on how successfully children with additional support needs are meeting their personalised targets. The school is aware that there is an urgent need to develop more effective whole-school tracking and monitoring of children's progress across all areas of the curriculum, building on the recently established systems for literacy and numeracy. With the increased use of reliable data, senior managers will be better placed to identify trends across the school for particular cohorts of learners and to determine whether socio-economic factors are influencing attainment and achievement.
- Staff participate in worthwhile career-long professional learning opportunities through sharing good practice and moderation training within their cluster group. Teachers would greatly benefit from increased access to more individual and collective training opportunities including looking outward by visiting more schools. This will support teachers to meet more effectively the diverse additional support needs of children, improve learning and teaching approaches, and to support the development of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Staff would welcome increased engagement in quality assessment and moderation activities to agree shared standards. Staff need to develop their knowledge and skills in determining what standards merit 'achievement of a level' in order to make more accurate professional judgement of children's progress. The leadership team is required to provide more strategic direction to the work of the school to lead these developments effectively.
- Staff should ensure that school improvement priorities focus on ensuring a positive impact on outcomes for children. There is some evidence of self-evaluation activities leading to improved outcomes for children in terms of their health and wellbeing, fitness, confidence and pupil voice but overall the pace of improvement is too slow. The school needs to focus on significantly increasing the pace of improvement, especially in relation to raising attainment and achievement 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

weak

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 numeracy and literacy

- The overall quality of children's attainment in numeracy and literacy is weak. Across the school, a majority of children, without barriers to learning, are making appropriate progress in reading and listening and talking. Around half of the children are making appropriate progress in writing and numeracy and mathematics. Significant numbers of children entering Prestonpans at P4 have not achieved appropriate levels. This has an impact on the pace of children's progress as they move through the school. The headteacher has recognised the need to ensure more effective partnership working with the local infant school, to ensure shared standards and expectations for all. Children who require additional support with their learning are making appropriate progress, but would benefit from earlier support and intervention at early level. The attainment data shared with the inspection team is based on teachers' judgement together with benchmarking and a range of other internal assessments. Teachers should continue to develop a systematic moderation process especially at the P4 and P7 stages to support confident professional judgements. Staff should also ensure that children have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate and apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts.
- The newly devised tracking and monitoring system is beginning to identify different groups of learners and whole school trends of attainment. These now need to be more widely used with teachers to closely monitor attainment, identify appropriate interventions and ensure that attainment improves over time for all children.

#### Number, money and measure

- Overall, there are significant gaps in children's learning and they lack confidence in applying their learning in unfamiliar real life contexts.
- Around 50% of the children who have achieved the first level are beginning to develop confidence in solving simple addition and subtraction problems with two digit numbers and multiply by one digit. They are able to use multiplication and subtraction knowledge to solve simple word problems. They require more practice using tables to enable them to build their confidence further. Half of the children in this group can tell the time using analogue clocks with a few confident in using the 24-hour clock to calculate train journeys. A few children can use simple equivalent fractions and can put the most commonly used fractions into order. However, many children at P4 have significant gaps in their use and application of number processes such as addition, subtraction with two and three digit whole numbers and applying steps and strategies to solve problems. A concerted focus on improving the quality of children's written numeracy work through increased opportunities to work on range of examples would encourage them to be more accurate in their calculations.

- At the second level, the majority of children who are predicted to achieve second level know their tables and are beginning to use them to solve word problems. Within this group, the majority of children identify the correct operation to use to solve money problems. A few children can read and record time in both 12-hour and 24-hour notation converting between the two but often lack confidence in the task. Many children at P7 lack confidence in applying mathematical skills in unfamiliar contexts and require more opportunities to reinforce and consolidate their learning.

### **Shape position and movement**

- The majority of children in P5 who have achieved first level can identify different angles including acute and obtuse. They can find right angles in shapes, estimate, and compare the different size of angles. At the second level, the majority of children, who do not have additional support needs, are developing their understanding of angles but were less clear about the properties of triangles. A few children are able to select the correct unit for measuring different areas.

### **Information handling**

- At P7, children working at second level are developing an understanding of using pie charts, bar and line graphs as tools for handling information. Across the school, children would benefit from more opportunities to collect, analyse and display information including the use of digital technology.

### **Literacy and English language**

- Children's progress in listening and talking and in writing is weak. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in reading. Children's skills in writing on entry to P4 are not sufficiently developed. This has an impact on their attainment as they move through the school.

### **Listening and talking**

- Across the school, there are opportunities for children to apply skills in listening and talking across learning. By P7, children are able to share their views and opinions and contribute to whole class discussions. During drama, children in P5 are able to contribute relevant ideas, information and engage effectively with others when exploring the topic on John Muir. However, the overall quality of attainment in listening and talking across the school is weak. Across the first level, children, when given the opportunity to work in pairs or groups, find it difficult to remain focused on task. Children are reluctant to contribute relevant ideas and opinions when engaging with others. In a few classes, children would benefit from calmer and more purposeful learning environments to support the development of skills in listening and talking. Teachers should now plan for a consistent approach to planning for and assessing listening and talking. Staff should develop success criteria specific to listening and talking with children on a regular basis to help children become more aware of the skills they are developing.

### **Reading**

- Attainment in reading across the school is satisfactory. Reading for enjoyment is promoted effectively across the school with a targeted reading resource. It is providing relevant assessment information. Staff report that there is an improved culture of reading that is impacting positively on attainment. Reading is given a high profile in school displays and there is a wide variety of books available to children. Novel studies and comprehension resources are used across all classes to develop reading skills.

- The majority of children working towards the first and second level are able to read aloud known and unknown texts with varying levels of confidence. Children are able to share preferences for particular authors and give supporting reasons for their choices. At P7, children are able to comment on setting and characterisation well. All children now need to be given greater opportunities to read aloud with confidence, fluency and expression.
- Whole school improvements in reading now need to focus on developing a range of skills as outlined in Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. A focus on the explicit teaching and consolidation of reading skills with less time spent on progressing through individual reading programmes and tasks would help raise attainment.
- All children need to have a clear understanding of the tools for reading to know and understand their own individual reading targets to improve their work. Children refer only to gaining points for reading targets and were not readily engaging in what they need to do to improve. Children need to develop a fuller understanding of the features of non-fiction text.

## Writing

- Overall, attainment in writing is weak. Across the school, there are opportunities for children to write in a variety of contexts. Many of the contexts for writing are effectively drawn upon the ideas taken from class novels. Children are applying skills in writing across other areas of the curriculum that include technologies, social studies and science.
- Planning for writing is well organised at P7 and supports children in writing pieces of text. The majority of children working within first level are able to punctuate most sentences using capital letters and full stops. Children are beginning to use common conjunctions and spell familiar and unfamiliar words with more accuracy. At P7, only a few children are using paragraphs to organise their work, use appropriate vocabulary and a variety of sentence structures to engage the reader.
- Across the school, there is a need for a strong focus on shared standards and expectations for presentation, legible handwriting, and a consistent approach to reinforcing spelling and layout. Across all stages, children would benefit from more opportunities to write across a wider range of genres and to write with increased length.
- Children across the school would benefit from well-constructed and consistent teaching approaches, which appropriately scaffolds their learning and develops their writing skills well. Staff should develop more effective use of feedback to ensure that children have a clear understanding of their progress and what they need to do to improve their work.

## Attainment over time

- The school provided data for session 2016/2017 to 2018 (predicted grades) demonstrating how children have progressed over time. This data confirmed the inspection team view that overall the children's attainment over time is weak. Some improvement in the progress of children's attainment in listening and talking is evident, however there is not yet evidence of this improvement in other curriculum areas.
- Attendance levels have been broadly in line with national levels over recent years. Commendably, based on data provided by the school, the number of incidents of exclusion has decreased by 62% since session 2014/2015 to end of April 2018.

## **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- The children in Prestonpans Primary School have a range of opportunities to enhance their personal achievements, which are celebrated at school assemblies. They are developing their health and fitness through participating in a variety of school clubs run by staff and the active schools' coordinator, for example, drama, hockey and karate. Children benefit from opportunities to join breakfast reading club, chess at lunchtime and podcasting. Children keep the school advised of their personal achievements outwith school. The school now needs to consider how achievements can be tracked ensuring all children are achieving and progressing well, and to identify children at risk of missing out.
- The children are very proud of their work on the accredited John Muir Award. The focus on outdoor education enables children to make good use of their local environment and could be developed further across the school to become an effective way to develop skills for learning, life and work. Impressive art displays are incorporated into this work.
- Older children develop leadership skills through the Kids Leading Kids programme supporting younger children to participate in weekly sporting activities. Younger children are learning progressive sporting skills for a range of activities including dodge ball.
- Children in P7 have the opportunity to take part in a residential trip to Dalguise Outdoor Centre to develop their resilience and wellbeing before transitioning to secondary school. Children commented very positively about the experience. Across the school, children would benefit from more opportunities to develop skills and attributes by accessing the wider community.
- Children's achievements could be matched to support raising attainment and progress across other curriculum areas. A whole school approach to ensuring all children recognise the skills they are developing, emphasising their importance and how to apply them in a range of different contexts would help to promote children's wellbeing.

## **Equity for all learners**

- The school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plan focuses on approaches to nurture which includes establishing a nurture facility and the provision of a breakfast club. The process for identifying children who would benefit from a nurture setting is being reviewed. At present, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these interventions. Staff should continue to embed approaches to monitoring the progress of cohorts of children including children with additional support needs and those affected by challenging family circumstances.
- The school reports that there is a strong uptake of lunchtime and other school clubs. The Outdoor Adventure Group allocates 50% of places to children in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1-4 to encourage those who are at risk of missing out to be involved in wider experiences.
- Most staff have engaged in training to encourage children to be more mindful in their outlook and report that this is having a positive impact on behaviour in some classes. A school positive behaviour policy is in place, and staff and parents report that behaviour is improving. Work now needs to be done to ensure this local authority policy is fully implemented by all staff, shared, and understood with all parents and stakeholders.

## 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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