

# Summarised inspection findings

Woodside Primary School

Aberdeen City Council

27 February 2024

## Key contextual information

Woodside School and Nursery Class is situated in the Woodside area of Aberdeen City. The school is part of the St. Machar Academy Associated Schools Group.

The headteacher has been in post since August 2022. The senior leadership team comprises two deputy headteachers and a principal teacher. The senior leadership team, in its current form, has been together for one term. There is also a team of 16 teachers and 12 pupil support assistants.

The school roll is 331 children working across 14 classes. The headteacher also has overall responsibility for the nursery with a deputy headteacher leading and managing the provision of the setting. The nursery is situated in a separate purpose-built building which opened in August 2021.

The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 to 3. Approximately one quarter of children have English as an additional language. In addition, approximately forty percent of children require significant additional support with their learning and health and wellbeing.

### 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

- Senior leaders and staff work very well together to provide a safe and highly nurturing learning environment for children. All staff across the school are committed to providing quality experiences for children and respond sensitively to their learning and wellbeing needs. Staff and children have very positive relationships and interact well with each other.
- Children and staff have a strong understanding of children's rights which underpin approaches to teaching and learning. Staff reflect well on the school values of 'ready, respectful and safe' with children. All children from P4 to P7 contribute effectively to the life of the school in leadership groups. As a next step, staff should expand the range of clubs and committees to include younger children.
- Across the school, staff adapt lessons, activities and teaching approaches well to meet the diverse range of learning needs of children. Staff know children's needs very well and use this knowledge to support children calmly with their learning. Almost all children are interested in their learning and work well individually, in pairs and small groups. In most lessons, teachers adapt the level of difficulty of activities well to match children's needs. In a few lessons, teachers need to set learning at a higher level of difficulty to meet the needs of all children. Senior leaders should continue to ensure teachers share strong practice in this more widely across the school to support consistency in challenge for all children.

- Children have opportunities to make meaningful choices about aspects of their learning in a few areas of the curriculum. For example, children have choice in learning that links different areas of the curriculum. Teachers consider the skills children will develop and ensure they learn about relevant and current issues such as sustainability and human rights. This supports children to engage well in their learning. Staff should continue to ensure that children have more opportunities to make choices and to lead their own learning.
- Senior leaders and staff work well together to meet the needs of children who require additional support or those with significant barriers to learning. Senior leaders deploy support staff effectively to ensure children receive prompt support when required. Support staff provide children with sensitive and intuitive additional support, understanding the needs of children well. Staff benefit from training such as autism support and fine motor skills therapy to provide effective targeted support for children. Staff and partners work well together to enhance aspects of children's experiences. For example, they offer children supportive experiences in the classrooms, nurture room, hub, star room, sensory room or outdoors.
- In most lessons, teachers and children discuss learning outcomes at the beginning of lessons and how children will know if they have been successful in their learning. Children outline learning targets and what success looks like in aspects of literacy, for example, in writing jotters. This approach is helping children to understand themselves as learners and what they need to do to achieve success. Teachers should build on this positive practice to provide further opportunities for children to have a greater influence in co-creating measures of success. Teachers should extend this across the curriculum.
- In most lessons, teachers provide children with a range of helpful verbal and written feedback about their learning. Across the school, children are involved in self- and peer-assessment to reflect thoughtfully on their learning. Teachers should continue to improve the quality and consistency of feedback to help children know what they have done well and what they need to do next. In doing this, teachers should ensure their feedback links clearly to learning targets. In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and they ask children questions to check their understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use skilful questioning very effectively to enable children to develop their higher order thinking skills. Staff should share this good practice with each other to extend the use of skilful questioning across the school.
- In most lessons, staff use digital technology effectively to enrich and support teaching and learning. Children are confident in the use of digital tablets to record each other sharing their learning with the class. Staff and school partners work well together to provide children with creative and effective outdoor learning experiences. They use a wide range of contexts for outdoor learning, including the school grounds and the 'Wee Woodside Forest'. All children are rightly proud of the tree each of them has planted.
- Staff in P1 classes are at the early stages of developing play pedagogy to support children's learning. There are worthwhile opportunities for children at P1 to participate in a range of play activities indoors and outdoors. Staff evaluate responsively children's learning experiences in 'play and plan' to decide on children's next steps in learning. Staff should continue to review their questioning during interactions with children to deepen their understanding. They should also consider the balance of free play and adult-directed play to ensure that play experiences link consistently to learning.
- Teachers use assessment data well to measure the progress children make. This includes national, commercial and school based assessments which they use in the course of teaching. Senior leaders and staff review assessment evidence in regular discussions to determine children's progress. They reflect on a range of assessment data skilfully to plan prompt

interventions for children who require additional support with their learning. Staff demonstrate clearly how they are closing learning gaps for individuals and cohorts of children. For example, through using successful teaching approaches to support children's writing skills.

- Teachers engage in moderation activities within school and with other schools within the St Machar Academy Associated Schools Group, particularly in writing. Moderation is supporting teachers' understanding of national standards and expectations well. Senior leaders engage in moderation in trios with other schools, supporting broader quality assurance. The school Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer also supports the moderation of standards through developing helpful resources. Senior leaders and staff should continue to undertake moderation activities using the national Benchmarks. This should support consistent accuracy of teachers' professional judgements about standards across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan learning jointly across stages, using a consistent school approach for short, medium and long-term planning. They share information well with each other. Teachers' planning is based on using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to provide children with progressive learning pathways.
- Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss children's attainment based on assessments and their professional judgements. They focus on the progress children make in literacy, numeracy and, health and wellbeing during these discussions. Teachers know the progress children make and identify gaps in children's learning quickly.
- Senior leaders use a helpful school tracking system which provides detailed information about the progress and attainment of individual children and year groups. This includes children who have barriers to their learning, are care experienced and those whose attainment may be impacted by their socio-economic situation. As a result of this approach, senior leaders identify promptly children who require further support with their learning.

## 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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. For school session 2022- 2023, the majority of children achieved expected levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics.
- Most children who require additional support, including those requiring significant support with their learning make very good progress towards their learning targets. Almost all children who have English as an additional language make good progress in their learning and are developing well their English language skills.
- Across the school, the majority of children make good progress from prior levels of attainment with a few children making very positive progress. A few children at each stage could be achieving more and should be challenged further in their learning.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

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

#### Listening and talking

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, follow instructions carefully and share their ideas confidently during class discussions. At first level, the majority of children contribute well during group discussions to share their views. A few children need support to take turns and listen to the views of others. At second level, the majority of children communicate clearly to explain their preferences for a wide range of texts and authors. They enjoy listening to or watching spoken texts to identify the main idea with supporting details. They would benefit from further opportunities to present information to a range of audiences.

#### Reading

- Children access a wide range of reading materials in reading areas across the school, including the cosy corner and in the main school library. At early level, the majority of children use their knowledge of sounds and letters to sound out simple words. At first level, the majority of children read aloud fluently using their knowledge of spelling to decode unfamiliar words. They discuss clearly their favourite authors and characters. At second level, the majority of children use a range of reading strategies well such as summarising and visualising texts to support their understanding. They explain successfully the features of non-fiction texts. At all levels, children would benefit from regular opportunities to listen to and discuss stories and books. Staff should continue to promote reading for enjoyment across the school.

## Writing

- Last session, staff implemented new approaches to teaching writing for children at first level. These approaches are raising children's levels of attainment in writing.
- At early level, the majority of children are beginning to form letters with increasing accuracy. They should continue to have opportunities to write through their play experiences. At first level, the majority of children write successfully in sentences using connectives. They know they can find unfamiliar words in a dictionary to support their spelling. They would benefit from regular reminders to present their work neatly and use capital letters appropriately in their writing. At second level, the majority of children write successfully for a range of reasons applying their writing skills across the curriculum. For example, they recently enjoyed carrying out research to write a biography about influential people for Black History Month.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Teachers provide children with useful opportunities to apply their numeracy and mathematical skills to real-life contexts.

## Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children count and add to 10 with increasing confidence, with a few children counting and adding to twenty. They require further support in telling the time to o'clock on analogue clocks. At first level, the majority of children identify simple fractions successfully. They would benefit from further consolidation of their numeracy skills to solve problems. The majority of children at second level describe accurately the strategies required to solve multi-part addition and subtraction calculations. They have a firm understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Children would benefit from revisiting concepts of measure regularly.

## Shape, position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children identify common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects successfully. At first level, the majority of children name and describe accurately the properties of 3D objects. At second level, the majority of children recognise acute, obtuse and reflex angles. They also name and describe the properties of multi-faceted 3D objects successfully.

## Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children use tally marks to display information of different types. At first level, children display and interpret data using bar graphs. At second level, children identify confidently ways to display data for different purposes, using charts, tables or graphs. They should now have more opportunities to develop their information handling skills using digital technology. At all stages, children would benefit from regular opportunities to revisit information handling throughout the year.

## Attainment over time

- Senior leaders maintain a comprehensive school tracker which details the improvement in children's attainment over time. Overall, children make good progress over time from prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders recognise the impact of the pandemic on levels of attainment, particularly for children at first level. Whole school approaches to support children's health and wellbeing are impacting positively on children's readiness to learn and attainment. Senior leaders and staff should continue to raise levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.



- Senior leaders and staff have implemented a range of well-planned literacy and numeracy interventions. They demonstrate clearly the 'added value' their interventions are having on children's attainment. Senior leaders and staff evidence clearly the progress children requiring additional support make from prior levels of attainment.
- Teachers use the national Benchmarks and a range of assessment evidence to review carefully children's progress. Senior leaders and staff should continue to engage in moderation activities within school and with colleagues in local schools. This will help them to develop more confidence in their professional judgements about children's progress and attainment.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- All children have useful opportunities to achieve and celebrate their successes throughout the year. Children enjoy receiving house points when they demonstrate the 'Woodside Way' school values. They share and celebrate their achievements out of school during whole school assemblies. These achievements are building children's confidence well.
- Children develop a range of skills through partnership working such as the Young Leaders programme where P7 children coach younger children in sport. This is developing children's communication and leadership skills well.
- Children demonstrate their skills well in a range of after-school clubs. This includes performance skills in drama and dance and using strong teamwork and sporting skills in activities such as golf, football and netball. Senior leaders track children's achievement out of school. Staff have a clear understanding of children who are a risk of missing out and take steps to ensure they have opportunities to participate and achieve. Building on this, staff should support children to discuss the skills they develop through their achievements.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a very strong understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context of the local community. The headteacher and staff have a very strong understanding of the challenges faced by families. They have put in place helpful approaches to track, monitor and support, the attainment and achievement of all children, including those who experience disadvantage. Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) wisely to provide well-planned interventions to support children's attainment gaps in wellbeing and in literacy and numeracy. This is an important strength of the school. These supports and interventions are accelerating children's progress to close poverty related attainment gaps. Staff should continue to use PEF in these effective ways to close further the poverty related attainment gap.
- In school session 2021 - 2022 attendance was just below the national average. The headteacher tracks children's attendance carefully. She takes steps to follow up when a child's attendance falls below the national levels.
- Staff are very mindful of the cost of the school day. They work in strong partnership with outside agencies to successfully signpost families to additional support when required. All children are welcome to attend a free breakfast club in the school. There is a supportive nurture breakfast which helps children in the transition into school in the morning. Trips and clubs are free of charge which ensures that no child is at risk of missing out. This is helping children to be included and involved in new experiences.



- Young Carers participate in a group to share their experiences with others and gain valuable support. Families participate in a dyslexia group which is helping them to support their children in their learning. These opportunities ensure that children and their families feel supported and included.

## Other relevant evidence

- Children receive two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Senior leaders consult carefully with children, staff and parents on the use of PEF.

## 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.