

Summarised inspection findings

Strathmiglo Primary School and Nursery Class

Fife Council

18 February 2020

Key contextual information

Strathmiglo Primary School is a small school in the village of Strathmiglo in Fife. At the time of the inspection, the roll of the school was 73 children across four classes.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher and staff have created a supportive school environment in which children are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Staff actively seek and use children's views about their learning and wider school issues. All staff share high expectations for children and provide a range of interesting and relevant opportunities for children to learn and succeed. Staff and children view the school as an important part of the local community. Learning and teaching is regularly focussed on community involvement and improvement. As a result, children develop a good understanding of their community and what they can do to make it better.
- The school's vision, values and aims are an important part of day-to-day practice. Children, staff and parents talk confidently about their meaning and impact. Children describe how they were involved in developing the aims of be ready, be respectful, be responsible. In classes, children relate very well to these aims and how they help them in their learning. Staff use aims well in the course of learning and teaching to communicate their high expectations of children.
- The headteacher and staff have a good understanding of the local community and the social, economic and cultural context of the area. They use this information well when tracking children's progress and attainment. As a result, they identify appropriate interventions and supports that are leading to improved outcomes for learners.
- Staff work effectively together to identify appropriate strengths of the school and priorities for improvement. They are reflective practitioners with a strong focus on improving outcomes for children. Staff evaluate their practice appropriately using national guidance. Staff should ensure that all improvement priorities are fully embedded in their practice. For example, staff need to revisit the action from last session for assessment as approaches are not yet fully embedded as part of teacher's planning.
- Children across the school make important contributions to the life and work of the school. Their views are valued and staff act on the suggestions that they make. For example, children are consulted meaningfully when choosing contexts for learning and deciding on the type of feedback about their work from teachers. Children have started to evaluate lessons and provide information to help teachers improve learning and teaching.
- Children are involved in improving aspects of the school through school committees. Children are not yet confident about what the committees have achieved. They need further support to

allow them to set and achieve goals for their committees. Children need to understand and celebrate the contributions they are making to school and community improvement.

- The school has been awarded Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Funding is being used to support children who face particular challenges in their learning. As a result, children are benefitting from increased support in class, allowing them to engage better in their learning. The school has also recognised the need to improve family learning. Staff have purchased resources to support parents and carers help their children with literacy and numeracy. Staff do not yet know the impact of these resources. The school should apply measures to evaluate if there are improvements in family learning.
- Professional learning for staff has an appropriate focus on improving outcomes for children. The headteacher has created a culture that encourages staff to continually reflect and improve their practice. Recent professional learning has enabled staff to understand the behaviours of children and strategies to improve engagement. As a result, relationships between children and staff are more supportive and positive. Staff are committed to improving learning and teaching. They engage well in both formal and informal activities and discussions with each other and with children about learning. This leads to high-quality and challenging learning experiences.
- Distributed leadership is a positive feature of the school. The headteacher supports staff to use their strengths and interests well and lead on identified areas for improvement. Almost all staff lead on priorities and additional activities that contribute to improving the school.
- The headteacher and staff team work well with a small number of partners. Partnership working with parents and organisations, such as the local Lunch Club, supports children well. Given the rural context of the school, staff should extend their network of partnerships to continue to provide children with challenging and relevant learning experiences.

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

- Across the school, children have positive relationships with staff and each other. Almost all children are motivated, engaged and enjoy learning. They are confident to share their learning with others. Staff have created a culture of shared high expectations and they ensure children feel valued and supported. In almost all lessons, learning and teaching is well planned and differentiated. As a result, almost all children are challenged appropriately.
- Teachers plan motivating learning activities to develop breadth and depth of children's understanding. Staff challenge children to applying their learning in creative and investigative real life contexts. In all classes, staff link pupil's learning to developing skills for learning, life and work. At early level, children are motivated and engaged in learning through a well-planned and challenging play based approach. The school should continue to provide children with planned activities to talk and listen within a range of contexts.
- In all classes, staff encourage children to develop a growth mindset and learn from their mistakes. As a result, children are becoming resilient learners who are confident in discussing their learning with staff and peers.
- In almost all classes, the pace of learning is brisk with well-established routines that allow children to spend a high proportion of their time on active learning tasks. This should become a consistent feature of practice across the school.
- Across the school, staff use effective learning and teaching strategies to support children who have additional support needs. The support for learning teacher and pupil support assistants provide valuable assistance to children who have additional support needs, including children that are higher-attaining. As a result, children are engaged in their learning and progressing well.
- Children are confident when given opportunities to take leadership roles within learning. This allows them to develop as independent learners, for example in their science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), digital technology and interdisciplinary learning tasks.
- Older children effectively support younger children in their learning through roles such as reading buddies. Children at P6 and P7 are developing a good understanding of higher order questioning through reading with younger children. Staff should develop this approach across all classes.
- Teachers use the four-part lesson model very successfully. They share consistently the purpose of learning well with children and make clear links to prior learning. There is established practice in children co-creating success criteria in group and classes. In almost all

lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers lead plenary sessions well and children are able to discuss what they have learned and their next steps.

- In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to determine children's understanding. The school should provide children with further opportunities to develop their higher-order thinking skills by embedding effective questioning across the curriculum at all stages. Teachers should continue to improve the level of challenge for children who are capable of higher attainment.
- Children use digital technology effectively to enhance aspects of learning across the curriculum. Staff use Interactive whiteboards well as a teaching tool. The school is beginning to extend the use of digital technologies further through exploring more use of QR codes and a variety of different software and apps. Children are skilled and motivated when using digital technology.
- In all classes, children choose and receive purposeful feedback from teachers. They use self and peer assessment well to evaluate their learning. Most children talk confidently about what they are learning and have a clear understanding of their next steps. Children value the 'talk time' conversations which provide them with a one-to-one opportunity to discuss their progress and next steps in literacy and numeracy with their class teacher. Parents and carers are encouraged to work alongside children and teachers in target setting during parents' evening and progress is shared through their homework diaries.
- All staff engage well in professional learning which focuses on developing aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. They have worked collaboratively to develop shared and agreed expectations in the development of their four-part lesson structure and promoting playful pedagogy. The school should share their best practice in pedagogy across all classes to ensure consistency in the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.
- The school uses local authority learning pathways well to plan for literacy and numeracy. Appropriate and progressive planning pathways in other curriculum areas are in place. Children are regularly involved in planning what and how they learn. This has included topics for interdisciplinary learning and homework tasks. All children are involved in pupil-led school committees and in the planning of activities to support the school and wider community.
- Across the school, teachers make effective use of formative and standardised assessments. Staff use them well to help determine children's progress, plan ongoing learning and teaching, and support teachers' professional judgement. Formative assessment strategies are well-established and understood at all stages. The school is beginning to use rich assessment tasks to assess breadth, challenge and application of knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Staff need to continue to use a quality body of evidence to support assessment judgements and decisions about next steps in learning.
- The school tracks and monitors children's progress effectively through the Fife Council tracking system. The headteacher meets regularly with staff to analyse effectively children's attainment and progress. This results in the accurate identification of support for children who are not making expected progress. As a result, staff's interventions are effective and lead to improvements in children's progress and attainment.
- Teachers have an understanding of the moderation cycle and have begun to moderate the standards of children's work in literacy and interdisciplinary learning with other local schools. These collaborative professional learning opportunities allow teachers to develop their confidence using Curriculum for Excellence benchmarks and an understanding of achievement of a level. For example, joint moderation of writing with cluster schools is supporting staff in

their understanding of the National Benchmarks. Staff should continue with planned moderation in other areas of the curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Across the school, children receive an appropriate broad and balanced curriculum which offers good access to their entitlements within Curriculum for Excellence. Fife's Learning Pathways in Literacy and Numeracy support teachers well to plan children's learning that build upon their prior skills and knowledge. There are appropriate planning pathways in other curriculum areas linked to skills development and the National Benchmarks. Teachers use these pathways successfully to plan teaching and learning. The school needs to develop a curriculum rationale in consultation with staff, children and parents. This rationale need to reflect a shared vision for all learners, which takes account of the school setting and the recently published curricular refresh.
- Staff plan interdisciplinary learning very well and offer children interesting and relevant learning experiences. Children are involved in planning by identifying their prior knowledge, what they want to know and how they might learn. For example, children are challenged effectively to apply their literacy, science and health and well-being skills in a smoking topic.
- Staff plan meaningful and relevant activities for developing skills for learning, life and work to ensure children learn within real life and meaningful contexts. For example, staff have developed a whole school budgeting pathway that allows children to apply numeracy skills in real life and meaningful contexts. This approach provides children with breadth and depth of rich learning experiences. Staff support children to link learning to career opportunities. For example, children in P6 and P7 have explored careers that involve measuring as part of their work on perimeter. As planned, the school is well placed to make use of 'Careers Education Standards' to develop a skills pathway.
- All staff provide very good opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum though relevant outdoor learning. Staff deliver a well-planned and progressive programme using the community and an outdoor residential centre. As a result, children participate in challenging experiences to develop their creative thinking. For example, children at the middle stages work collaboratively in groups to problem solve a series of physical challenges. Outdoor learning is developing children's inter-personal and leadership skills very well and successfully promoting learner engagement. As planned, the staff should continue to develop these opportunities to promote children's creativity.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- There is a nurturing and positive ethos across the school. Relationships between staff and children are caring and supportive. Staff understand the needs of children very well and demonstrate this in their interactions with them. As a result, children have positive attitudes towards themselves as learners. Almost all children say they feel safe and that staff and other children treat them with respect.
- Children have a good understanding of physical health and wellbeing. For example, they understand the benefits of exercise and what to do to keep safe when outdoors. They are less confident when talking about what they need to do to ensure good mental health. Children are knowledgeable about food and ingredients such as the sugar content of certain foods. Children do not always apply their knowledge about healthy food to the choices they make. Staff should help children apply their knowledge to their own wellbeing. The school should ensure there is a joint approach to delivering aspects of the food and health curriculum involving the school and catering service. There is a need to strengthen links between learning and practice to establish whole school consistent messages and expectations around food.
- The headteacher together with catering staff and the education authority need to improve a few aspects of school food provision. There is a need to monitor actual uptake and assess how well the planned menu is meeting children's nutritional requirements as detailed in the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act.
- Almost all children have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Children in P5-P7 describe ably the indicators and provide good examples as to what it means to be nurtured, responsible and included. Children at P6 and P7 use their knowledge well to help children in the nursery understand about being safe and healthy. Staff need to help children apply their knowledge and understanding about the wellbeing indicators to their own health and wellbeing. Staff should support children to develop language associated with health and emotion. Through 'talk time', the school already has in place regular opportunities for children to talk to staff on a one to one basis about their literacy and numeracy. These discussions should include children's health and wellbeing strengths and needs.
- Staff are beginning to track children's progress through the health and wellbeing curriculum. It is too early to determine the quality of information they are tracking and how it will be used to improve outcomes. Staff should extend this tracking to include children's strengths and needs within the wellbeing indicators.

- Children link the wellbeing indicators to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a result, they make meaningful connections between how exercising children's rights contributes to positive wellbeing.
- Almost all staff have a good understanding of their statutory duties. Children with additional support needs or those who face challenges are appropriately identified and supported. Some successful strategies used are not formally recorded. Staff should formalise these to ensure information is shared appropriately with others. The headteacher and staff monitor interventions well and evaluate the impact on children's wellbeing and attainment.
- The school's health and wellbeing programme provides children with opportunities to learn about aspects of children's rights, equality and sustainability. Through assemblies and cultural celebrations, children learn to value and understand equality and diversity. Children have started to learn about the 17 Global Goals for Sustainability and staff use this context well to help children understand about equality and diversity. Through this work, children have a good understanding about the lives of others and the importance of their actions to protect the environment.
- Children participate in meaningful learning about different cultures and gender roles in society. As a result, they have a good understanding of issues such as gender equality. Children are well placed to continue to learn about equality and diversity to include other protected characteristics.

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, attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Information provided by the school shows that in 2018/2019 most children in P1, P4 and P7 achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. The school's attainment information is accurate.

Attainment in Literacy

- Across the school, most children are making very good progress in literacy. In session 2018/2019, most children achieved national expectations in reading and writing and almost all children achieved national expectations in talking and listening. A few children who have additional support needs are making suitable progress.

Talking and Listening

- Overall children's attainment in talking and listening is very good. Across the school, almost all children listen very well and talk purposefully to each other and adults.
- At early level, almost all children follow simple instructions confidently and take turns appropriately when talking and listening during group activities. Children listen very well independently to taped recordings of their reading book. This develops their vocabulary and understanding of texts.
- At first level, children communicate clearly with others for a range of purposes. They participate collaboratively in groups to provide explanations, encouraging younger children to complete outdoor learning challenges. They co-construct effectively success criteria in almost all lessons, enabling them to select and share information about their learning.
- Children at second level offer their opinion and views effectively in discussions and build on others' ideas. They can identify accurately strategies such as using eye contact, tone and pace of voice to make interesting and engaging presentations.

Reading

- Children are enthusiastic about reading. Across the school, they select books from the mobile library during one term each year. The school should offer children the chance to borrow books from the school library in other terms and continue to support children develop reading for enjoyment.
- At early level, almost all children are developing phonics and decoding skills well. They can confidently use their knowledge of sounds and picture clues to read words in their reading books. They complete literacy challenges, such as letter treasure hunts, very successfully

and demonstrate that they can engage in reading independently and improve their knowledge of sounds.

- Most children at first level can read aloud fluently, paying attention to punctuation to add expression. Children identify their favourite books and confidently explain the features and purpose of fiction and non-fiction texts. They share thoughts about the main ideas of a text well. They are less confident when describing writer's use of language to develop characters.
- At second level, children engage enthusiastically with a variety of reading materials and regularly select texts. When reading aloud, children demonstrate fluency, understanding and expression very well. They can confidently explain why they like particular authors, making reference to genre, setting and characterisation. They talk enthusiastically about their class novel and other books they are currently reading. Most children respond well to a range of questions to demonstrate their understanding of texts. Children at second level apply reading strategies by creating higher order thinking questions for younger children.

Writing

- At all stages, children write very well for a range of genre and purposes such as reports, imaginative stories and letters. The standard of writing across the school is very good. There are examples of very effective feedback from teachers, and as a result, children's writing improves as they progress through the school.
- At early level, almost all children are beginning to explore writing across the curriculum. For example, children write their address correctly as part of interdisciplinary learning. Through play, children are forming letters very well. Children should continue to link reading with writing to support formation of lower and upper case letters.
- At first level, almost all children write very well independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. They are linking sentences appropriately using common conjunctions and using paragraphs to organise texts. Most children are using very good vocabulary for specific purposes when creating texts across a range of genres including play scripts and letters. Children should revise the terms noun, adjective and verb to support their understanding of grammar. There is a need to improve presentation of writing for a few children at the middle stages to ensure a consistent high standard across the school.
- At second level, most children are able to write very good persuasive pieces of writing using appropriate language. For example, children write persuasive letters to the headteacher suggesting improvements for their classroom to help them learn. They use interesting vocabulary to convey thoughts and feelings and effectively use personification, idioms, to enhance their imaginative writing. There is strong evidence of independent writing across the curriculum.

Attainment in Numeracy

- Across the school, most children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children who have additional support needs are making appropriate progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children have a sound knowledge and understanding of number to ten. They complete accurately simple additions within ten and describe and identify fractions including halves, thirds and quarters. Almost all children are developing their understanding of time very well. They can set clocks to the correct time and are beginning to use calendars to identify successfully days and months.

- Almost all children working within first level have a very good understanding of number and number processes. They are aware of place value of numbers to 100 and beyond. Children can successfully multiply and divide two digit numbers by one digit numbers and accurately multiply numbers by ten and 100. Almost all children are adept in recognising the time in analogue and digital formats. They are applying this knowledge in real life contexts such as developing personal timelines. Children use their knowledge of mass and measure very well to choose appropriate units when measuring everyday objects.
- At second level, most children have a very good understanding of number and number processes and can confidently use a variety of strategies to find answers to complex problems. They apply skills in measure very successfully to challenging real life contexts such calculating carpets on based on floor plans of houses in the local area are. Most children accurately create a monthly budget for a family using their learning very well to carry out money calculations, compare costs and determine affordability within a given budget.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise, describe and sort common 2D shapes correctly. They use accurate language well when giving simple directions and can programme toys accurately to move simple directions.
- At first level, almost all children draw, describe and compare the properties of 2D shape and 3D objects successfully. They apply their knowledge very well when tiling to create patterns using more than one shape.

Information handling

- Almost all children at early level collect data for specific purposes. They organise and display the collected information correctly in a variety of ways. Children create pictorial displays including Venn diagrams, bar charts and pie charts and can talk confidently about their displays.
- At first level, almost all children skilfully enter information on data displays such as bar charts, and tables. They are confident in extracting information from the collected data displays.
- At second level, almost all children use different methods, including the use of digital technologies to analyse and display data very well. They apply their understanding successfully in real life contexts for example, creating bar charts to show how many pupils are involved in each of the school committees.

Attainment over time

- The school has accurate data over a three year period demonstrating very good levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Evidence to support the data such as assessments and children's work is robust. Information provided by the school demonstrates they are successfully raising attainment for most children. The school is just beginning to track children's progress in health and wellbeing. They should use the information to identify children who require individual support to improve their wellbeing. Children are making very good progress in other areas of the curriculum. The school should now gather evidence of this in a more formal system.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Across the school, children are developing important and relevant skills through well-considered and interesting contexts. For example, children understand very well that their roles at the regular community café helps them to develop skills for work. Children have a very good understanding of how their achievements in sporting activities contribute to their skills. They demonstrate well in their interactions and discussions how their experiences and achievements both in and out with school help them to become responsible, effective, confident and successful.
- Children talk very well about their skills and how they will use them in other contexts. For example, they talk with confidence about skills such as communication, team working and need to compromise when working with others. Children relate these skills and what they are learning in the curriculum to future careers such as engineering and working in the field of medicine.
- All children value being part of school committees such as the Community Improvement Group and the Corridor Committee. Children are enthusiastic and understand their role in the groups. They are not able to talk confidently about what the groups have achieved. Staff should support children to set clear goals for committees and enable them to understand and celebrate their achievements better.

Equity for all learners

- All children across the school have very good opportunities to achieve success in their learning. The school has a strong focus on learner participation and valuing children's views. Children's participation in clubs and activities outwith school are tracked. Staff identify children who do not access activities and they are encouraged to participate.
- All staff have a very good understanding of the strengths and needs of children. Positive and respectful relationships across the school create an inclusive ethos. Appropriate interventions and supports allow almost all children to attain and achieve as highly as possible. The headteacher and staff identify children who are not attaining as expected and put in place appropriate supports. As a result, children who face challenges in their learning make very good progress.

Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

- The development and promotion of partnerships
- Collaborative learning and improvement
- Impact on learners

- The school has successful and productive partnerships with the local community. Partnerships enhance learning experiences for pupils and support staff development. The school has worked to build relationships based on mutual respect and as a result, partners are very positive about the school. Staff recognise the benefits of partnerships and the impact they have on children's learning. Moving forward, the school should include partnerships when designing their curriculum rationale. As the school is in a rural setting, staff should also widen their network of partnerships beyond the local community to offer children diverse learning experiences.
- Partnerships with the community allow children and local residents to learn and work together. For example, Strathmiglo Bowling Club supports children to learn bowling and improve their health and wellbeing in the summer term. Commendably, children contribute effectively to the community by collaborating effectively with the local Community Association. For example, children are working with residents to create community planters for the area.
- The school has a close partnership with the nursery. Children demonstrate their learning and apply their skills with the nursery children. Teachers work across the primary and nursery setting at early years to develop play pedagogy. Continued collaboration on playful pedagogy will continue to enhance staff skills.
- The 'Community Café' enables children to develop skills that they recognise as necessary in the workplace and to interact meaningfully with local residents. Children have learned First Aid from a local resident and shared their learning very well using digital technology to create a child friendly film.
- Partnerships with other schools, services and organisations across Fife are contributing well to the school. A recent robotics challenge with Fife College offered children an opportunity to improve their understanding of science and technology. Fife Psychological Service is supporting staff to develop their skills and knowledge about nurture. Staff have worked with the Youth Music Initiative to improve their skills in delivering the music curriculum.
- Parents are positive about their partnerships with the school. Parental engagement is actively encouraged. Staff use informal feedback, GLOW class blogs, formal consultation events and learning afternoons to provide parents with helpful feedback about the progress their child is making. GLOW class blogs help parents to reflect with their child on their learning and discuss their next steps. A few parents would like more advice on how to help their child with their learning. The school should continue with its plans to provide a range of parent workshops and family learning opportunities.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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| 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.