

# Summarised inspection findings

**Nether Robertland Primary School**

East Ayrshire Council

19 March 2024

## Key contextual information

Nether Robertland Primary School is a non-denominational school. It serves the communities of Stewarton, the east side of the River Annick and all children living in surrounding rural areas. At the time of the inspection, the roll at the primary stages was 305 children. There are currently 12 classes. The headteacher took up post in 2021 and is supported by a deputy headteacher, two principal teachers and one acting principal teacher. The majority of children live in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 7-10. School attendance is in line with the national average.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 deputy headteacher provide very effective leadership and direction for the whole school. Staff place a clear focus on ensuring children's wellbeing and meeting the needs of families. This results in a strong and inclusive ethos within the school, which is a key strength. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for further development of the school.
- Staff work in partnership with children and families very well. They recently revisited the school's values as well as recreating a new school vision: Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow. Children talk confidently about the values of determination, teamwork, respect and responsibility. All staff and children demonstrate the values very effectively through their relationships and actions in the daily life of the school. Children who display the values are rewarded by wearing values lanyards and receiving recognition in weekly assemblies. Parents feel they understand and know the school values through monthly family values challenges. As planned, senior leaders should share the vision and values with the wider school community. This will develop further their awareness and understanding of the ethos of Nether Robertland Primary School.
- Almost all children feel included and listened to regarding issues that affect them. Children are involved meaningfully in a wide range of real and relevant leadership opportunities. The groups consist of children across all stages. They include Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO), a 'Stay Period Protected' group and the 'Students Thrive and Rise Squad' (STARS) improvement group. Older children have the opportunity to become house captains with children across the school choosing their preferred candidate. Children from across the school are digital, wellbeing and climate champions. They speak to children across the school and gather their views and ideas. This results in changes to priorities on the school's improvement plan. These leadership opportunities provide relevant contexts for children to contribute effectively to improvement, while developing skills including communication, teamwork, resilience and environmental awareness.

- All staff have leadership roles that are linked to school improvement priorities and key initiatives. These include leading on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), outdoor learning, play pedagogy, leadership of learning and physical education. These roles are very effectively supporting improvements in learning and teaching and meeting children's wellbeing needs.
- Staff access a wide variety of professional learning opportunities and are highly committed to their own professional development. Commendably, teachers and pupil support assistants undertake training and additional qualifications to enhance their own skills. This includes a focus on rights, relationships and behaviour, trauma informed and inclusive practice and digital schools development. As a result, approaches to personalised support are stronger and individual children's needs are very well met. Children lead the decision making in their care and education. Staff value opportunities for professional dialogue and sharing their views and ideas. This helps them to support one another in improving further effective learning and teaching.
- Teachers are keen to learn from others to ensure they continue to refine and improve their practice. They are involved in education authority professional learning focused on leading learning and planning, learning, teaching and assessment. This supports sharing of effective practice and moderation and impacts positively on children's experiences. Children benefit from the high-quality professional learning and development which is leading to better outcomes for children and families. All staff undertake annual professional reviews. These capture effectively agreed targets, next steps, identified professional learning, annual goals and the impact of action points.
- The senior leadership team monitors the work of the school very well. The headteacher and depute headteacher have embedded staff's use of a comprehensive improvement calendar. This is linked to How good is our school? 4th edition (HGIOS4) quality indicators. Senior leaders' approaches include observing children's experiences, sampling the work of children, planning and feedback meetings and pupil voice groups. Senior leaders provide thorough and detailed feedback for teachers which supports them to evaluate their practice very well. As a result, staff are well placed to plan effectively for future changes aimed at improving outcomes for all children.
- Staff use self-evaluation processes very well to support strategic planning for continuous improvement. They use national guidance and self-evaluation frameworks and are developing their use of How good is OUR school? to gather pupil voice about aspects of class environments. As planned, it will be important to continue to review this approach to build upon children's meaningful involvement in improvement planning.
- The current school improvement plan is very well aligned with national and local improvement priorities. These are based on important areas of development that are making a difference to learning teaching and assessment. The headteacher keeps parents informed about school improvement priorities effectively during Parent Council meetings and other forms of communication. The headteacher uses parent views well to inform priorities within the improvement plan. Almost all staff are committed to a collaborative approach to continuous improvement. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the pace of change to ensure the whole school community feel meaningfully involved in the development and delivery of key priorities. They recognise that a period of embedding the significant number of improvements made over recent years is now required. This will support staff to review and implement improvement priorities which have the greatest impact on outcomes for children.

- Senior leaders have developed clear plans, in line with national expectations, for using the school's Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocation. These plans have been discussed with the Parent Council and a minority of children.

## 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

- Almost all children are respectful, polite and extremely proud of their school. The positive relationships between staff and children reflect the school's strong, caring and nurturing approaches and the refreshed vision and values. Almost all children show care and kindness towards each other. The school's ongoing, rights-based learning and class charters are supporting children to make positive choices about their relationships and behaviour.
- Most children are happy, motivated and engaged in their learning, which is underpinned by the school motto, 'Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow'. They have frequent opportunities to work independently and most participate enthusiastically when working with others. Children have regular opportunities to share their views on a range of topics and feel confident their contributions are listened to.
- Teachers use a range of questioning very well to extend children's thinking and check their understanding. In most classes, tasks and activities are well matched to children's learning needs. Almost all children who are not making expected progress are well supported. Teachers should continue to ensure that all children receive appropriate challenge in their learning. They should continue to increase opportunities for children to lead their own learning.
- In almost all classes, teachers share the purpose of lessons effectively with children, encouraging them to reflect on what success will look like. As a result, most children are able to talk confidently about their learning. Children experience an increasing number of opportunities to revisit and co-create criteria for success in their learning. Staff provide helpful verbal feedback and are developing approaches to ensure written feedback supports children's next steps.
- Teachers and children regularly make very good use of digital technologies to enhance and support learning and teaching. Children demonstrate confidence in using technology to support learning in literacy, numeracy, mathematics and interdisciplinary learning. They can explain how they use digital technology to undertake research and access a range of programmes to complete tasks. Older children use technology confidently to develop skills in three-dimensional modelling and graphics. They talk confidently about their work, the challenges and potential solutions. Almost all children use matrix bar codes to access and consolidate their learning in a variety of curricular areas.
- Teachers understand the value of outdoor learning to extend and deepen children's learning well. They are developing this area further to increase the rich and meaningful opportunities across all stages. Children take part in activities including the improvement and development of garden areas, planters and den building. This supports their ability to learn cooperatively and effectively with others to find solutions to challenges.

- Children experience a range of well-planned play experiences at early level that reflect children's learning needs. Staff are embedding their understanding and skills in play pedagogy and how best to provide challenge, high quality experiences and gather information about the progress children are making. This is supported through regular discussions and professional learning with local authority colleagues using national practice guidance.
- Senior leaders and teachers use a school assessment calendar well, to support a rigorous approach to monitoring children's progress. This sets out clearly the range of assessments undertaken in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing at key points in the year. This includes formative, summative and standardised assessments. Senior leaders support staff well to use assessment information effectively to measure children's progress and achievement, share expected standards and make confident professional judgements. As a result, teachers are supported well to plan next steps in children's learning and identify clear targets for individuals, groups or the whole class. At key points across the year, assessments provide information to support the reporting of children's progress to parents through annual reports and regular parent consultations. As planned, senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop this practice across all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers are highly skilled in developing and deploying appropriate interventions to support children who require support with aspects of their learning. This is leading to most children making improved progress in their learning. Pupil support assistants work very effectively in the class or in separate group situations with children who require additional support.
- Teachers undertake moderation of assessment in literacy and numeracy within the school setting and with colleagues across the local education group. These moderation activities are developing shared expectations of national standards and support accurate judgements about children's learning.
- Teachers' planning links clearly to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and East Ayrshire progression frameworks for all areas of the curriculum. Teachers supplement long and medium-term planning well, using a digital platform with detailed weekly planning of learning and teaching. Teachers' planning indicates how learning will be adapted to meet the needs of most learners. Children contribute meaningfully to the planning of their learning across different subjects by sharing their preferences or interests.
- Senior leaders place a strong emphasis on robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They hold termly tracking and assessment meetings with each class teacher. Staff know children very well as learners and take individual children's circumstances and relevant information into account when discussing their progress and achievement. Senior leaders and teachers identify children who are not making expected progress and may require additional support or challenge with their learning. Staff agree strategies, interventions or resources which will be used to target improved progress. Senior leaders identify and use information very effectively about the individual progress of children in different cohorts. This includes children who are care experienced, those who have English as an additional language and families who may be affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- All teachers use progression frameworks provided by East Ayrshire Council to plan learning across all curricular areas. Teachers deliver courses and programmes across all curricular areas. They use progressive pathways to plan the delivery of the curriculum over a level collaboratively. Teachers are developing their use, frequency and consistency of the 1+2 approach to language learning covering French in addition to English. Senior leaders are aware this is an area in need of development and plan to include modern and foreign languages within a newly developed long term broad general education planner.
- Staff, children and parents updated the school curriculum rationale last session. This successfully summarises and explains the contexts and approaches that are unique to Nether Robertland Primary School. It supports the embedding of the principles of curriculum design and outlines the four contexts for learning. The rationale is used effectively to reflect on practice and inform school improvement.
- All children receive two hours of quality physical education (PE) each week. This is providing children with opportunities to explore aspects of their physical wellbeing.
- Children receive opportunities to learn about key Christian festivals and other world religions. Children have opportunities to visit other religious buildings as part of their planned curriculum programme. School chaplains attend the school regularly through planned visits to school assemblies.
- Children experience music lessons in class and a few children in the upper primary stages experience free music tuition for percussion at Stewarton Academy. They have the opportunity to receive free tuition for other musical instruments from P6 onwards and be part of the Stewarton Academy Junior Band. A number of children also receive free guitar tuition every week in school delivered by a member of staff from the secondary school. Children experience Expressive Arts and Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects within discrete lessons and through regular interdisciplinary learning (IDL) experiences. In addition, dance, music and drama supports popular whole school events. These include Christmas concerts, participation in the school choir, a P7 end of year show, a Day of Scottish Dance and a Dance Fest.
- Staff plan transitions at key points effectively, including from the Early Education Centre to P1 and P7 to secondary school. Parents are invited to events to find out about their child's move to P1 and value these opportunities. Children in P7 take part in a well-established transition programme for their move to Stewarton Academy. This includes the transfer of wellbeing information, sharing of prior learning and visits to the primary school by secondary teachers. Children make visits to Stewarton Academy during term four. Children with barriers to their learning are supported well with enhanced arrangements when moving from nursery to P1 or from P7 to secondary school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents say that their child enjoys being a learner in Nether Robertland Primary School. They comment positively about staff who know their children well as learners and treat them fairly and respectfully. They feel confident asking questions, making suggestions or discussing concerns.
- Most parents are satisfied with the quality of teaching and would recommend the school to others. Most parents feel their children are making good progress in learning with a few stating that learning is not challenging enough. They are keen to be involved in a wider range of opportunities where parents and children can learn together. They would also welcome more information on how their child's progress is assessed.
- The Parent Council keeps parents well informed about how they work with the school. They are extremely supportive and are keen to provide opportunities for parents to be more involved.



## 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- The school community has a strong and shared understanding of the importance of children's wellbeing and how it supports children to be successful. Staff ensure children's wellbeing needs are prioritised through a range of approaches including regular wellbeing check-ins, surveys and a wellbeing profile. Almost all children speak knowledgeably about what actions they can take to ensure their wellbeing and those of others. They understand how to nurture others as wellbeing champions, playground buddies, support zone operators in the playground and lead assemblies to demonstrate values. In classes, shared learning areas and the playground, children show respect and kindness to one another as they learn and play. They are polite, respectful and very proud of their school.
- Children can demonstrate how to keep themselves and others safe through regular opportunities to explore safe responses and behaviours in health and wellbeing lessons. Most children have the knowledge and skills to make safe and positive choices about their health. Staff use and model appropriate language to support children to speak openly about their feelings and resolve any disagreements when they occur. Children feel listened to and valued. Almost all children say they have an adult in the school whom they can talk to about any concerns or issues they may have.
- Senior leaders and staff ensure that children are at the centre of decision-making processes and their views are sought regularly on key decisions which affect their lives. Almost all children feel they belong in the school and know that adults care about them. Staff encourage children to demonstrate the school's values through nomination awards at weekly assemblies. The school's rights-based learning approach enables children to learn within an ethos of respect and dignity. Teachers ensure children know and can talk about their rights under the UNCRC and a monthly focus on individual rights.
- Most children understand the importance of being active and how it supports their own wellbeing. All classes benefit from outdoor learning activities which help to engage and motivate them in their learning. Children lead enthusiastically a range of physical activities and sport, in addition to planned PE lessons. These include supervising young children's toothbrushing and running lunchtime and after school clubs with the support of Active Schools coordinators. For example, children in P6 provide playground games and basketball sessions as part of a leadership programme and JRSOs share information about road safety.
- Senior leaders and staff have well developed processes for identifying children who may need additional support at an early stage. Children's plans support professionals, children and their families well to ensure each child makes good progress in their learning. Staff have a sound understanding of current legislation and guidance related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Senior leaders have developed highly commendable systems for monitoring children's progress. These systems reflect statutory duties clearly and support programmes and

approaches to meeting children's needs very effectively. Almost all children who receive additional support are now making appropriate progress towards their individual learning targets. A small number of children with more complex needs would benefit from additional support in lessons to help them engage with group learning activities. Senior leaders should continue to work with partners to further develop teachers' skills in supporting children with more complex additional support needs.

- Senior leaders have developed strong partnerships with professionals in education, health and the community to ensure early and effective intervention to support learners. 'Team with the Family' meetings ensure information is shared with parents and carers. The headteacher and depute headteacher recently introduced improvements to planning and review meetings to ensure that parents views are more clearly recorded, understood and less bureaucratic.
- Senior leaders monitor rigorously, children's progress, attendance and timekeeping. They provide individual support and engage the support of a home link worker and other partner agencies where needed. Skilled pupil support assistants provide a range of flexible, additional support for children. This has led to improvements in the attendance of almost all children who received support. Senior leaders prepare children and their families well for the next phase of their education by forming close links with key staff and partners. This is ensuring that almost all children settle well and continue to progress.
- Senior leaders and staff work hard to ensure the school has an ethos and culture of inclusion. Almost all children, parents and carers, staff and partners feel that they are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner.
- Senior leaders use the school's PEF allocation, community links and partnerships very well to ensure that no child is disadvantaged. Almost all are making expected progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff in the Acorn Room provide an inclusive, flexible learning environment which offers small groups of children experiencing particular challenges a safe space. Staff offer creative, empowering and personalised learning activities which are helping children to overcome barriers to learning. Almost all children who attend the Acorn Room are now attending school and re-engaging successfully with their class for blocks of learning.
- The school values and celebrates diversity and challenges discrimination. Staff promote awareness within the community through its health and wellbeing curriculum, workshops with parents, partnerships locally and regular school assemblies and events. Children understand and value diversity through, for example, the school's links with Kilmarnock Football Club to promote 'Show Racism the Red Card'. In a recent survey, almost all parents and children said they felt valued.

## 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 English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. School data shows that most children at all levels achieved national standards in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, a minority of children are exceeding nationally expected levels. Across the school, there are a few children who could be achieving more in literacy and English and numeracy.
- Almost all children receiving additional support are making good progress with a few making very good progress.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children at early level are making good progress and almost all children at first and second level are making very good progress in all aspects of literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- At early level, most children can listen well and follow instructions. A few require some support to help them listen and respond appropriately when others are talking. At first level, most children can confidently share their views and opinions and listen attentively to others. They would benefit from developing further the difference between fact and opinion. At second level, children share information confidently with others, participate in debates about topical issues and discuss a range of texts and topics. They should embed their ability to make notes and use these to create new texts for a range of purposes.

### Reading

- At early level, most children are developing their knowledge of sounds and letters well to help them read simple words. They are aware of a few features of fiction and non-fiction texts. They should develop further their ability to share their likes and dislikes of a text. At first level children read fluently and demonstrate some expression when reading aloud. They would benefit from support to use contents pages and indexes. At second level, most children enjoy reading regularly in class and at home. Most children are building their skills and knowledge to interrogate texts to deepen their understanding. They can talk about the strategies of skimming, scanning, summarising and increasingly how these skills are useful in supporting their learning. Children should develop further their recognition of techniques used to influence the reader.

### Writing

- At early level, the majority of children experiment with mark making and are attempting to spell and write letters and commonly used words. They would benefit from more adult-led activities to develop fine motor skills. At first level, most children can write simple sentences with correct spelling, use of finger spaces and full stops. Most children are writing independently and

structure their writing, sequencing their ideas. They write for different purposes and audiences. At second level, almost all children write in an extended way for a range of different purposes, using their knowledge of technical aspects appropriately. They use interesting vocabulary, varied sentence length, building of tension and suspense effectively to make their writing more engaging. Children at all levels would benefit from clear expectations and a consistent approach to handwriting and letter formation.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Almost all children, are making expected progress towards nationally expected levels. A minority of children are exceeding expected progress.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, children recall number sequences and order numbers to 20 and increasingly add and subtract mentally to ten. They would now benefit from further opportunities to explore measure and money through play. At first level, children can round two and three-digit numbers to the nearest ten and 100 with confidence. They can add and subtract with three digits using a range of strategies through word problems. Children would benefit from more opportunities to use multiplication and division facts to solve problems. Almost all children can identify fractions and order simple fractions in order of size. At second level, children can use their knowledge of equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages to solve problems. Children can calculate profit and loss accurately and compare costs within a given budget. They can use their knowledge of measure to solve complex problems related to area. Children would now benefit from further experience in solving real-life examples involving the calculation of durations of time.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level children recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Children would now benefit from further opportunities to explore shape and symmetry through play. At first level children name, identify and describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes and create tiling patterns. They would benefit from further opportunities to identify and describe three-dimensional objects. At second level children illustrate four lines of symmetry for a range of two-dimensional shapes. Children create nets for simple three-dimensional objects. They describe different triangles and identify acute, obtuse, reflex and right angles. Children would now benefit from more opportunities to explore scale and interpret simple models, maps and plans.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children create pictograms to predict and display their favourite Scottish food. At first level children use bar graphs to record, display and interpret data gathered from a questionnaire. At second level children analyse and interpret data to draw conclusions and answer questions. They are learning to use digital technology to display data. Children have a good understanding of probability and use this to solve problems. Across the school, children should continue to use, record and display data in different real-life contexts.

### **Attainment over time**

- Overall, attainment has remained consistently high over a number of years. Senior leaders identify dips in attainment quickly and take very effective action to address gaps in learning. Senior leaders and teachers have developed very clear, robust and reliable systems for tracking and monitoring children's attainment across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing over time. Senior leaders and teachers use data very effectively to identify children who are not making expected progress. They implement effective universal and targeted interventions quickly and evaluate them regularly. Almost all children with additional support needs make good progress towards closing identified gaps or dips in attainment.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements in class and during assemblies, through school displays, online platforms and at the family 'Success Showcase'. The school celebrates good quality writing through their 'Rockstar Writer' displays which reflect a range of different writing styles and contexts. Children are developing an understanding of the skills for learning, life and work they are developing through participation in these activities. Families are encouraged to share children's achievements outwith school which are then celebrated during assemblies. Staff track children's participation in school clubs, events and other achievements outside of school. This supports them to identify skills being achieved as a result of activities and support children who may be at risk of missing out.

## Equity for all learners

- Staff identify and track poverty-related attainment gaps using a range of appropriate data. They use this information very well when planning targeted support for individuals. Almost all children are making good progress towards closing the gap in their attainment in reading writing, listening and numeracy.
- Staff address financial constraints that may prevent children from taking part in opportunities for learning and achievement. The school community provides outdoor clothing, sanitary products, stationery, uniforms and fruit free of charge. They organise and facilitate breakfast and a range of sporting activities free of charge. Staff regularly signpost agencies, grants and financial aid to help families where necessary. Children and families feel included and supported.
- Senior leaders' main focus of the PEF plan is to make improvements in health and wellbeing, numeracy and literacy. This includes additional staffing to deliver and measure targeted interventions and provide children with support to engage with the curriculum, skills-based learning and engagement in class. While these important interventions focus appropriately on those children most impacted by poverty, they also impact positively on all children across the school. Senior leaders track targeted interventions, evaluate the impact for individual children and adjust interventions as a result of evaluations.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

- Senior leaders and staff at Nether Robertland Primary School have developed a highly efficient digital system for identifying and monitoring the progress of children with additional support needs. The system minimises bureaucracy while ensuring that statutory duties are reflected clearly and key information about appropriate support strategies is shared appropriately. Children's plans, support programmes and approaches to meeting children's needs are highly accessible to all teachers, key staff and partners. The system is supporting professionals to identify children who may need additional support at an early stage. As a result, almost all children who received additional support are now making appropriate progress towards their individual learning targets.

## 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.