Summarised inspection findings

Colinton Primary School and Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

8 October 2019

Key contextual information

Colinton Primary School is situated beneath the Pentland Hills, serving parts of south Edinburgh and both Redford and Dreghorn Barracks. The school is non-denominational with eight classes and a nursery offering morning and afternoon sessions. The school roll is 149 with around 65% of children coming from forces families. The school has an extensive outdoor area with access to a sports pitch and a purpose built play area/garden in its grounds.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory

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

- There is a positive, respectful and inclusive ethos within Colinton Primary School and children benefit from supportive relationships with staff. Children new to the school report that they are made to feel welcome when they arrive at Colinton Primary School. Children's rights are promoted by the school's work on Rights Respecting Schools and charters are on display in all classrooms. There is scope to extend and embed the focus on children's rights and take steps to link this with school values in different learning contexts.

- In most classes, children appear motivated and engaged in learning. In the majority of lessons, children benefit from the opportunities they have to work in pairs and groups.There is scope to develop further approaches to cooperative learning across the school. There is a need for children to be given more opportunities to lead their own learning. In the majority of classes, children are able to choose the level of challenge for different activities they undertake. There is a need to ensure this approach offers an appropriate level of challenge and is tracked effectively. In most classes, teachers plan for differentiation however there is scope to provide greater challenge for a significant minority of learners.

- There are a few examples of strong practice. In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of questioning and stimulating contexts to engage learners. However, this is not yet consistent across the school. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Over the last few years, staff have been working hard to improve consistency of approaches to teaching. There still remains a need to maintain a sharp focus on this area of the school's work. At times, lessons are overly resource based and teacher led. In a few lessons children are undertaking low level tasks which do not support progress in learning, and are unsure of what they should do when they complete their work. As a result, the pace of learning in these classes is not appropriately brisk. There is scope for teachers to use more creative approaches which allow children to apply their learning in a range of contexts across the curriculum. This includes developing approaches to play-based learning in the early years of primary.

- In a few lessons, children make use of digital technology to enhance their learning. The school recognises that this should be a more regular feature of lessons. We have suggested involving children in promoting the use of digital technology across the school by, for example, training children to act as Digital Leaders. This would also enable children to develop their leadership

skills and enjoy success in a meaningful way across a greater range of contexts. In developing this further, close monitoring and tracking of children's achievements will be necessary. The school should look to make greater use of the wealth of interesting contexts outdoors.

- Overall, the majority of teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. In the majority of lessons, staff make effective use of formative assessment strategies to support children. Staff would benefit from a clearly defined overview of strategies which are to be used at particular stages. In almost all lessons, children understand the purpose of their learning and know how they can achieve success. Staff are beginning to make use of higher order questions to extend and deepen children's learning. A few staff have supported colleagues to make use of higher-order thinking skills in literacy lessons. Staff value the support and the resources that have been provided to take this forward.

- The quality of teachers' written feedback to children is variable across the school. In the best examples, feedback is framed to support children to have a clear understanding of their individual strengths and next steps in learning. However, in a few classes there is little evidence of children receiving feedback on their writing. To support children to make better progress in their learning there is a need to ensure feedback is consistent and adds value in all classes. In a few classes, peer and self-assessment approaches are used effectively.

- Staff track children's progress in aspects of literacy and numeracy. However, teachers are still at an early stage of interpreting and analysing the data available. The senior leadership team, together with staff, should continue to review approaches to tracking and monitoring to ensure there is robust analysis of information which is then used to inform next steps.

- Teachers are making increasing use of summative and standardised assessments to support their professional judgements of when children achieve a curriculum level. There is not yet a shared understanding of assessment and staff recognise that this remains an area for improvement. We have asked the school to consider establishing a whole-school assessment framework to provide greater clarity and consistency in approaches to assessment. The school should continue to develop approaches to assessment as an ongoing part of learning and teaching, incorporating the National Benchmarks, across all curricular areas. Teachers have participated in moderation activity with colleagues within their local cluster. Recently, they have undertaken moderation activities in relation to feedback. This should remain an area of focus. There is a need for staff to continue to engage in quality moderation activites both within and outwith the school to ensure they have a shared understanding of standards and expectations. Staff should continue this work to support the development of high quality assessments.

- Over the last few years, staff have worked together to streamline their approaches to planning. Teachers have an annual overview to support planning of learning across the curriculum. A few teachers also use a termly plan. We have asked that all staff make use of the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence when planning children's learning. The school recognises the need to take a more holistic approach to using experiences and outcomes to ensure the planning process is manageable for staff and meaningful for children.

- Across the school, children report that their 'best work' is captured in their progress books. In a few classes, staff are supporting children to make links between their achievements and learning targets. This practice should be developed across the school. This would help children become more attuned to their strengths and next steps in learning.

- Led by the headteacher, the school should now develop further approaches to teaching to ensure all children receive an appropriate level of pace and challenge to maximise their progress. They should monitor children's progress and the quality of teaching and learning more frequently and more rigorously.

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	satisfactory

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

■ The overall quality of children's attainment is variable. Data provided by the school indicates that most learners in P1 and P7 will achieve appropriate levels in numeracy, with the majority of pupils in P4 achieving in line with national expectations. Predicted levels for literacy indicate that most learners are on track to achieve appropriate levels. However, inspection activity does not validate the attainment data shared by the school. A significant minority of children do not make sufficient progress. During the school year there is regular movement within the school roll as a result of the redeployment of forces families. Standardised assessments are used to identify what children know and any gaps in learning. However across the school there is an over reliance on standardised assessments. School leaders should take prompt action to ensure staff use a wider range of assessment evidence when making judgements of progress and achievement. More effective moderation processes and a greater understanding of national standards will support staff to make more robust and reliable judgements of children's progress toward and achievement of a level. The use of the National Benchmarks should be reviewed as a matter of urgency so that they are no longer used as a planning tool.

■ Currently, whole school data for literacy is not broken down into the different aspects of literacy although teachers track the distinct areas at class level. As planned, the headteacher should ensure that each area of literacy is monitored and discussed with teachers to gain a clear picture of progress for individuals, and ensure appropriate support and challenge for all pupils. This will also provide the ability to track cohorts within each distinct area of literacy and identify whole school trends.

■ There is significant scope across the school to raise attainment and achievement for all learners. Clearer progression pathways and improved approaches to assessment would support staff to ensure that all learners make the progress of which they are capable.

Attainment in literacy
Listening and talking

■ Across the school, children are capable of making stronger progress in listening and talking. Children are friendly and welcoming to other children and visitors. They enjoy engaging with adults and are happy to talk about their school but they do not always listen well to each other when working in pairs or groups. At early level, the majority of children listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. A few children become disengaged when listening in groups. At first level, children are confident sharing their learning with their classmates, for example, describing the puppets they have made. They are unable to identify the characteristics of an effective listener or speaker. By second level, most children know they have to speak clearly and should maintain eye contact with their audience. They are unable to describe or

demonstrate the skills required for debating. Staff recognise that there is a need to establish a whole-school progressive pathway for listening and talking.

Reading

■ The overall quality of children's reading is satisfactory. At early level, children enjoy different opportunities to listen to stories and to read aloud. Across the school, staff are now using 'reading detective' prompts to engage children more effectively with written texts. Teachers make use of a new weekly reading framework to provide structure and progression for lessons. Staff report that these new developments are having a positive impact on learners' progress. At the first level, the majority of children are developing fluency and can read with expression. They can identify the main ideas from different texts. Most children in the first level focus group report that they enjoy reading. By the end of second level, the majority of children can describe the difference between skimming and scanning. Across the school, children are unable to identify different strategies to read unfamiliar words or phrases. Most children report that the only strategy they use is to 'sound out' a word.

Writing

■ Across the school, the quality of writing is too variable. Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in writing, however there is evidence of a deterioration in standards of writing for a few children. In a few classes, children produce high quality pieces of writing for a range of purposes and benefit from strong approaches to teaching writing as well as very helpful feedback. In these classes, it is evident that children are making progress. There is a need to share this practice across all classes to improve the consistency and overall quality of children's writing. At early level, children are able to form letters correctly. The majority of children are able to copy sentences with a few being able to create their own. By first level, children write for different purposes including report writing, and imaginative writing. By the end of second level, the majority of children can write extended pieces of writing. Children at second level are able to describe the features of different genres such as letters and reports. In a few classes, teachers need to have higher expectations of the quality and presentation of children's writing. Staff would benefit from further opportunities for moderation of writing within and out with the school.

Attainment in numeracy
Number, money and measure

■ Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy. Staff report that the introduction of 'Colinton Counts' for mental maths, is beginning to have a positive impact on learners' progress. At early level, most children can count forward and back up to 20 and the majority can identify coins up to 10p. By the end of first level, the majority of learners can discuss a few different strategies for computations. They have a basic understanding of how the skills they are developing will benefit them in their future lives. Children in second level are developing a knowledge of budgeting and can talk about interest, loans and savings. They do not have a clear understanding of decimals, decimal fractions and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level, most children can use positional language to describe where something is located. By the end of first level, most children know and accurately use the four main compass points. They can plot points on a simple grid. They are unable to demonstrate an understanding of right angles and turns. At second level, most children can describe the properties of 3D objects and 2D shapes. They do not have a clear understanding of complementary and supplementary angles.

Information handling

- Across early level, most children can sort objects according to properties such as size and colour. They can contribute to simple pictorial displays of information. At first level, most children can describe ways to sort and gather information. There is scope to strengthen their knowledge of the ways in which this information can be represented. By the end of second level, most children can extract information from graphs and charts in order to answer questions. They are unclear about factors which affect the reliability of data when drawing conclusions. Across the school, increased use of digital technology would enhance learning across numeracy and mathematics, and in particular in the collation, presentation and analysis of data.

Attainment over time

- A large proportion of children and families experience a transient lifestyle . A significant number of children arrive and leave throughout the school year and have experienced education in a number of settings and different education systems. This can have a significant impact on children's attainment and leads to difficulties in tracking the attainment of groups and cohorts of children over time. The complex nature of the school community and the fluctuating school roll, results in the picture of attainment not being easily comparable with other schools.

- The school has developed a means of identifying gaps in learning in literacy and numeracy using a range of standardised assessments. These assessments are used at the start of each session with existing pupils and with new pupils arriving throughout the year. When gaps are identified, children receive additional support. Their progress is evaluated and tracked. Documentation provided by the school shows that almost all children who receive this targeted support are making progress against prior standardised assessment results. There is a need to ensure that these assessments are used alongside wider assessment evidence when making professional judgements of progress towards and achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level.

- A whole school tracking system is in place for literacy and numeracy which incorporates a range of information about each pupil. However there is insufficient evidence of children's progress across other areas of the curriculum. There is scope to extend the tracker to all curriculum areas and in particular health and wellbeing in order to identify and overcome the barriers faced by some children. Staff engage in termly tracking meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress of each child in their class. There is a need to improve staff understanding of progression through a level.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Opportunities for learners to take responsibility and contribute to the life of the school are limited. The school has a pupil council. However, whilst children acknowledge that they are listened to, they are unclear as to whether any of their ideas or suggestions are acted upon. There is significant scope to increase opportunities for pupil leadership and participation for example, in promoting children's rights or contributing more fully to the school's self-evaluation and improvement.

- The school offers a range of clubs and sporting activities. Targeted taster sessions are offered to identified groups of children. Tracking of participation in these and other activities out with school is at the early stages. Senior leaders should identify how this data will be used to record the skills being developed and support effective planning and evaluation of wider achievement.

- Achievements are not consistently celebrated and shared. Children shared that this is something the school used to do, which they valued. Prompt action should be taken to review

arrangements for recognising children's achievements. This should contribute to learners' awareness of the skills they are developing and add value to their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and their families well and work with a range of partners to overcome barriers and support positive outcomes for learners. For example, the breakfast club, sponsored by a business partner, is well attended and valued by both children and parents.

- The headteacher recognises the need to use the tracking of wider achievement to identify children at risk of missing out on experiences in order to enhance their opportunities. More effective use of the school's considerable outdoor learning space would provide further opportunities for achievement and attainment and support equity for all.

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.