

Summarised inspection findings

Springfield Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

SEED No: 5947227

23 January 2018

Key contextual information

The HT is also HT of the partnership school Kirkpatrick Fleming. This partnership was established in 2014.

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 has been in post since January 2014. She was a teaching headteacher (HT) of Kirkpatrick Fleming school prior to being appointed as HT of the partnership school, Springfield. During the past three years, she has developed a clear strategic understanding of where the school can improve a range of aspects of its work. She is confident in her role and in establishing positive relationships across the school, with its community and with partners.
- The school is revising its vision and set of values. It is in the process of sharing this work to ensure a common understanding of what the school aspires to achieve for learners and the ambition it has for them to be successful. The headteacher has accurately identified the next steps in refreshing the school's curriculum rationale so that it now reflects the school's emphasis on outdoor learning, resilience and relevance to the school's unique context. Staff should take steps to further promote equalities as a feature of the school's values. The refresh of the rationale together with the shared vision and values is at an early stage of being embedded in the life of the school.
- The headteacher recognises that while there is a clear vision for the school, she wants all parents to be actively involved in supporting children's learning. The headteacher should take forward her plans to streamline self-evaluation and in so doing, continue to involve parents and partners in evaluating the work of the school.
- Staff work effectively together as a small team. They are highly motivated by changes to the school's provision through partnerships with Kirkpatrick Fleming Primary School staff. This joint working is valued by staff and is beginning to help them develop greater confidence in their own self-evaluation and professional judgements. Children are also motivated by the links they have with children in the partnership school. This has helped

foster a strong sense of pride and achievement. The school works closely with other schools in the cluster to take forward improvement priorities. These priorities are created as a result of understanding the school's rural context and its common features associated with a wider group of small schools.

- Staff across the school are very committed to achieving success for all children. They understand the demographics and unique rural context well. As a result, they know the children and families very well and understand learners' individual needs. They place high importance on supporting the emotional and social needs of children and have created a warm and welcoming environment where all are valued. Staff have built effective partnerships and relationships with the local partners in the community. Strong links have been forged with the Chaplain who supports religious observance and religious and moral education in Springfield Primary School and the partnership school. The school is regarded positively by its community and the headteacher is ensuring established links are sustained and new links developed.
- The headteacher provides clear leadership and communicates effectively to support staff in identifying change in their own practice and across the work of the school. This includes children having a say about how to improve the school, well planned transitions and a growing emphasis on outdoor learning. The clear focus of the headteacher in developing systems to support on-going change and improvement, ensures that everyone is involved in developing and supporting the school's motto of 'strength, pride, success'.
- Staff are using challenge questions from HGIOS? 4 to evaluate the school's progress and improvements. They are developing professional enquiry skills through teacher-led initiatives in literacy and numeracy. This is also supporting the identified use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and identifies measures of impact on attainment in listening and talking.
- Staff demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and are keen to learn from others to ensure they continue to refine and improve their practice. They value the opportunities they have for professional dialogue and the use of video recordings of their practices. This helps them to regularly support one another in improving consistently high quality learning and teaching. Staff access a variety of professional learning opportunities including peer visits and regular cluster school meetings. We would encourage staff to continue to look outwards at practice beyond their own cluster and authority to further refine their effective practice.
- Children in the upper stages are contributing to school improvement through their leadership responsibilities as house captains and junior road safety officers. Children value these opportunities for undertaking leadership responsibilities. The school should now build on this practice to give children increased roles as leaders and taking responsibilities. There is scope to increase the range of ways children contribute to school improvement priorities and evaluation.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- Learning and engagement
- Quality of teaching
- Effective use of assessment
- Planning, tracking and monitoring

- The overall quality of learning and teaching is good with aspects of very good practice.
- All staff work hard to create a positive learning environment, underpinned by the school's priorities. Relationships are consistently positive between staff and children and among children. Almost all children are motivated, enthusiastic and keen to learn, particularly when actively involved in practical and outdoor activities. Outdoor learning is developing well and supports all children to engage in their learning.
- Teachers give clear explanations and use questioning well to challenge children's learning and encourage them to think. They identify opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills and take account of the different needs of learners in planning their lessons.
- Teachers provide helpful, oral feedback to learners through individual discussions, plenary sessions and opportunities for peer assessment. This is helpful to children in summarising and consolidating their knowledge and understanding. The school is developing its approaches to formative assessment. Teachers gather a range of information at key points in children's learning to inform the next steps. A promising start has been made to using learning targets. However, a few children are not always sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve in their learning.
- In most lessons, digital technologies are used effectively to motivate learners across the school. In some instances, these are used well to encourage learners to lead their learning and demonstrate for their peers how they arrived at a particular solution when adding and subtracting numbers and money. There is scope to further develop the use of a wider range of digital technology to support children's learning in different contexts including outdoor learning.
- Teachers use an appropriate range of assessment approaches to evaluate children's learning and inform their planning. All children have individual targets in literacy and numeracy. Children's personal learning targets provide a clear focus for regular learning conversations between children and teachers. The school is successfully encouraging parents to become involved in learning conversations. This approach is helping children and their parents to understand what children need to do to improve in their learning and how well they are progressing. The school has identified the need to ensure that children's personal targets are easily understood by all children.

- The use of assessment is developing well and includes opportunities for moderation with stage partners at the school's partnership primary school. Children receive helpful feedback from teachers, orally and in their jotters which helps them to achieve success. The school now plans to extend these approaches to assessment across all curriculum areas.
- The headteacher and school value collaborative working and should continue to share developments with staff. Teachers are developing a shared understanding of standards and are engaging in more regular dialogue in the school, as well as with colleagues from neighbouring schools. Continued moderation activities should help the school to develop consistent expectations and support professional judgements.
- While the school is clearly improving its procedures for planning, tracking and monitoring individual children's learning and progress, it recognises that it needs to further develop these approaches across the curriculum and the four contexts for learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

- The curriculum rationale shapes the current thinking, vision, values and aims of the school community. Children experience a broad curriculum which is based on a three year planning cycle. The curriculum includes a clear focus on health and wellbeing and outdoor learning to reflect the school's small, rural context.
- The curriculum outlines a helpful overview of literacy and numeracy skills, and highlights opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills. This ensures that tasks maximise opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in a progressive way and higher attaining children are appropriately challenged.
- Regular, planned opportunities for outdoor learning allow children to be creative and reinforce their understanding of learning concepts. The school could explore ways to recognise children's achievements through accreditation.
- The school reflects its unique local and historical context well within the curriculum through topics of interest related to the local community. The headteacher is planning to further improve opportunities for children to develop skills for learning, life and work which take account of the local and wider community.
- Inter-disciplinary learning is well planned to ensure that children experience a range of themes and learn skills coherently across different curriculum contexts.
- The programme for Religious and Moral Education is set out clearly in a calendar and opportunities for religious observance are supported through regular visits by the school's Chaplain.
- Continuity from P7 to S1 is strengthened through visits from secondary school staff and discussions within the cluster group to support curriculum continuity. Children with identified additional support needs and those who are vulnerable, experience enhanced transitions which help them to settle well in secondary school and ensure that secondary teachers plan to meet their needs effectively.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- The headteacher and teachers are well respected by parents and the wider school community. They work well together to provide a welcoming and supportive school environment. Parents who participated in the school inspection say they are welcomed, listened to and supported by the headteacher and staff.
- Good use is made of texting, newsletters and leaflets to share information about events and children's learning experiences. Parents are appreciative of the school's approaches to involve them in learning conversations about the progress children are making in their learning. There is scope for staff to use their well-developed information technology skills through the use of digital media to share information with parents and the wider community.
- Staff are committed to improving parental engagement and welcome ideas from parents on how they would like to be more involved. The school is supported effectively by the Parent Council and its recently appointed Chair. Parents are consulted well in developing the school's vision, values and aims. Several parents volunteer regularly to support fundraising. This has been successful in involving parents in a programme for families to cook together. While parents attend school events their views are sought on what the school can do to improve. The school and Parent Council would like to increase the number of parents involved in the work of the school.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- The school's approach to wellbeing is well embedded and firmly focused on improving outcomes for children and their families. Staff are committed to creating a positive climate for learning where children are supported well and enjoy learning. Relationships are positive and respectful between all members of the school community. The headteacher and staff work in collaboration with key partners to promote awareness of health and wellbeing and the importance of healthy lifestyles. Staff are beginning to identify how these interventions are helping to improve outcomes for children.
- Children show a good awareness of their rights and take on responsibilities willingly such as welcoming and escorting visitors to the school. Children act responsibly and work together well in pairs and groups to support one another to learn.
- Almost all children describe how they are taking more responsibility for aspects of their own wellbeing and that of others. This includes making appropriate choices of foods and the Junior Road Safety Officers teaching younger children about road safety around the village.
- The school has developed positive relationships with partners such as the 'Active Schools Coordinator'. This is helping to raise children's awareness of and participation in activities which promote healthy life styles. Key partners such as community police officers, fire officers and the NHS improvement team enhance and support children's learning around keeping themselves safe and the importance of exercise and healthy lifestyles. The school works with others to ensure children have good opportunities to build social networks with peers out with their school through after school clubs, inter-school festivals, competitions and a residential excursion.
- While the school has received a very low number of complaints over the past three years, in the few incidents where these do occur, it would be helpful for the school to clarify and formalise its approach to recording incidents including the outcome of its own investigations.
- The school has effective arrangements in place for monitoring attendance. Children's attendance at the school is high. When the headteacher has concerns about individual pupil absence, she is proactive in communicating with parents. There have been no exclusions this year.

- The school has effective procedures in place to meet children's health care needs and administering medicines. Important information about individual children is shared with teachers as appropriate. Staff receive appropriate training in first aid.
- Along with their cluster schools, Springfield School has recently begun to support children to assess their wellbeing using wellbeing indicators. The school is planning to develop the wellbeing indicators in a more robust and focused way which supports children's learning. It would be helpful to monitor and track children's wellbeing over time by providing regular opportunities for self-evaluation.
- The school has a clear understanding of statutory requirements and codes of practice. Annual child protection training and updates ensures all staff are aware of appropriate approaches to safeguarding. Relevant information is shared with partner agencies. While there were no concerns at the time of the inspection, the headteacher hosts a regular meeting for staff with social work services and ensures staff have access to relevant training. The school works well with key partners and agencies to ensure children's needs are met and appropriate support is accessed as required.
- Children identified as requiring additional support achieve targets set within individualised educational programmes (IEPs). The progress is regularly monitored and reviewed and planning includes children's and parents views on the effectiveness of their learning programmes. The environment for learning is accessible to children and adults with disabilities.
- Staff who are deployed to support learning programmes would benefit from additional specialist training to ensure that they have the necessary skills to support individualised learning as effectively as possible.
- The school is mindful of the need to challenge children's views and understanding of the world they live in. The school could provide further opportunities to actively promote children's awareness and understanding of equality issues and of the diversity that exists within the wider community.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy
- Attainment over time
- Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Equity for all learners

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy:

- As a small school of 22 children, attainment is tracked for individuals and small groups of learners. Data is gathered through a variety of standardised assessments and summative assessments to inform teachers' professional judgements on progress in Curriculum for Excellence. Tracking is monitored and dialogue regularly involves how well children are making progress. Overall, the school's CfE levels accurately reflect good achievement in literacy and numeracy.
- There are no children who are looked after and accommodated (LAC) or have a coordinated support plan (CSP). Children who have individualised educational programmes (IEPs) are making appropriate progress overall.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading, writing, talking and listening, and most children are making good progress in numeracy.
- Staff make use of CEM data to reflect on children's attainment and progress over time. The school tracks and monitors all children's progress. Their judgements about progress through CfE levels are accurate in the main. The school has identified the need to develop a coherent and structured assessment framework in order to measure attainment more consistently. This will also provide staff with a clearer overview of children's on-going pace of progress across the school.
- Teachers are developing a shared understanding of standards through regular discussions and moderation work with partner and cluster schools. They need to build on this practice to support staff and to promote high expectations for all children. Staff have made a positive start to using national benchmarks.

Listening and talking:

- Children across the school talk well in pairs and small groups. Relationships amongst children and with staff are very positive which leads to good social conversations.
- Most children speak confidently to visitors and are proud to talk about their school responsibilities and roles.
- At the early level, children are making good progress in talking and listening. They follow instructions well and answer teacher questions with enthusiasm. Those at first level are developing skills in evaluation and are confident when articulating their thoughts and opinions.

- By the second level, children talk about the ways in which they are involved in developing the school's vision and values based on aspirations. Overall, they are confident in the school setting but could become more skilled in collaborative group work.

Reading:

- Children across the school are enthusiastic about their reading and enjoy a wide range of fiction books. They like to select personal reading books and information books.
- Across the school, most children read well and read aloud from shared group texts. At the early level, children are making a positive start to developing reading skills and using skills very effectively to access other curricular areas and interests. Most children at first level read very confidently and are capable of greater challenge. Children working at second level read a range of group novels and give reasons why they are interested in the books they read. They read with good comprehension and understanding of a growing range of vocabulary.

Writing:

- Across the school, most children are gaining a good range of technical skills in writing. Most children working at early level are making a positive start to writing independently. Good progress is made by those working at first and second level. The school should now find approaches to allow children across the school to apply their writing skills in a wider range of contexts. There is scope to improve consistency in handwriting skills and standards of presentation.

Numeracy and mathematics

- In numeracy, most children are making good progress across the school, with a few making very good progress. Children at the early level recognise numerals and count confidently using familiar objects and pictures. Most children at first and second level add and subtract numbers confidently and accurately. Children at all stages recognise the value of coins and most can select and pay for goods. Through cooking together with parents, children are learning about measuring volume and using numerical scales.
- Across the school children apply their learning in numeracy and maths to real life contexts and outdoors. Children at first and second level use natural materials outdoors to support their understanding of angles and shapes. They are increasingly able to explain their answers to problems using appropriate strategies and using technology.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children across the school are developing a range of skills and attributes. They are developing leadership skills as house captains and junior road safety officers.
- Overall, most children are successful learners and are confident when talking about their learning and the pride they have in the school. Children are responsible and effective contributors and through assemblies are learning about the wellbeing indicators, rights and responsibilities. The school should continue with its plans to make their approach to tracking achievement more systematic.
- The school promotes a culture which reflects the importance and value placed on children's achievements. Individual and whole school achievements are recognised,

shared and celebrated in school on the Celebration of Success wall, at assemblies and displays around the school.

- Children are involved in making decisions and sharing ideas on how to improve school life. Almost all children feel confident about expressing their opinions and that they can influence change.
- The school community actively supports a variety of local causes. Children are involved in organising events which have been well supported and successful in raising funds for selected charities.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher understands the demographics of the school population and evaluated the work of another school in deciding the focus PEF initiative. The school has appropriately chosen to focus on the development of talking and listening skills of some of the youngest children. Staff are considering the methodology they use to evaluate the impact of this initiative in closing the attainment gap and take decisions on future resources. They work collaboratively with speech and language specialists to develop and evaluate the initiative.
- The headteacher is effective in self-evaluation of the school's work and continues to seek ways to ensure equality of outcomes for all children. Outcomes for children in wider achievements is a growing feature of the school. The growing range of opportunities on offer to children gives them a choice that appeals to their interests. The school should now use its tracking information to ensure all children are participating as fully as possible. There is scope for the school to raise awareness of children's wider interests out of school.

School choice QI : 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- **Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation**
- **Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data**
- **Impact on learners' successes and achievements**

- The school's approaches to self-evaluation are an important strength of the school's work. The staff have accurately evaluated the quality indicators and supporting evidence in preparation for the inspection. The headteacher and staff gather a wide range of information and views about the work of the school. This includes surveys, consultation with the Parent Council, increased emphasis on pupil voice and activities outlined in an annual quality assurance calendar. Overall, the information and data that is gathered helps inform how well the school is making progress towards improvements outlined in its improvement plan.
- Staff work effectively as a team and share leadership of initiatives focused on outcomes for children. They evaluate these and monitor progress children are making in talking, listening and mental calculations. These initiatives are at an early stage and staff will evaluate the overall impact and decide whether the work will be extended and developed across the school. The staff also work closely in partnership with Kirkpatrick Fleming school and benefit from opportunities to share good practice and professional learning.
- The school has strong links with cluster schools and works effectively with others to identify priorities to bring about improvement across the schools. This work has led to improved transition arrangements from Springfield to Annan Academy. The schools in the cluster and partnership believe the focus is leading to improved continuity in learning and the curriculum.
- The headteacher and staff know children very well and make effective use of a wide and growing range of attainment data to track how well children are progressing. The school should now take steps to ensure all planning, monitoring, tracking and evaluating is manageable and relevant. A sharper focus on learning, teaching, assessment and attainment will help bring about further improvements and positive outcomes for learners. The school should develop a framework for assessment and link this more closely to evaluation of planning for learning. Systematically track children's achievements, their participation in clubs and the responsibilities they take. This information can be used when evaluating progress in attainment and provide a helpful insight to ensuring there is no pattern of underachievement for any individual.

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.

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