

# Summarised inspection findings

**Rigside Primary School**

South Lanarkshire Council

14 January 2020

## Key contextual information

Rigside Primary School is a small rural school situated within an isolated area of Clydesdale, South Lanarkshire Council. At the time of inspection, there were 65 children on the roll. Almost all children reside in SIMD one. There have been a number of changes to staffing in recent years. This includes the appointment of an acting headteacher who has been in post for approximately one year. The school has had three headteachers over the last three years. The substantive headteacher is currently seconded to the local authority.

### 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

- All staff have a very clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the local community. This has been used to shape the vision, values and aims of the school. These are displayed in an accessible and succinct way which help stakeholders identify with them. The school's vision and values permeate and shape the work and life of the school, in particular, approaches to wellbeing, inclusion and equity. Staff report that the vision, values and aims provides them with a clear sense of direction and common shared purpose.
- Through strengthened approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance, the acting headteacher has been able to identify well-judged priorities for school improvement. These are reflected in the school improvement plan which is part of a three year cycle. Staff are heavily involved in contributing to these priorities and evaluating progress towards tasks and activities that are detailed in the operational action plan. We have asked the acting headteacher to adopt the streamlined approach taken with the Scottish Attainment Challenge plan to all aspects of strategic planning. The time is now apt for the school to focus more closely on pedagogy and approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress.
- The acting headteacher provides effective and supportive leadership to all across the school. She leads by example and promotes a caring and supportive environment. Since taking up her post, she has shown a strong commitment to leading change. This has had a positive impact on children evidenced by the quality of care and support the school provides. There is a consensus that her effective leadership is supporting a positive culture change in the school.
- An important aspect of change leadership in the school is the development of positive relationships with stakeholders, dedicating professional learning, time and resources to implementing improvement plan priorities. This allows all to revisit and discuss the rationale for change and the strategy required to implement improvement. For example, collegiate sessions on 'learner engagement', supported by local authority input, has resulted in a shared understanding of the concept of engagement.

- There is a culture of empowerment in the school, where all staff, both teaching and support staff take on lead roles and responsibilities. All staff understand that they have an important role to play in taking forward the work of the school. Staff feel empowered, able and confident to exercise initiative, share responsibility and adopt lead roles in their own areas. They understand their own leadership roles and those of colleagues within and across the school through 'lead updates'. In moving forward, staff should take on leadership responsibilities that will have the greatest impact on children's learning and attainment.
- There is increasing evidence of a more structured approach to self-evaluation for improvement across the school. There are effective systems in place to gather the views of stakeholders, undertake learning observations and analyse data. Teachers are also increasingly using the challenge questions in HGIOS 4 as a tool for reflection. There is a recognition that further refinement of quality assurance and its links to strategic planning for improvement is required to ensure greater coherence. Children are also increasingly empowered in driving forward change across the school through their work in school committees and their feedback through school questionnaires and 'blether' surveys.
- Many of the current initiatives are yet to reach fruition and therefore it is too early to assess the impact of these changes. The school is well placed to make further progress.

## 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

- The school's vision underpins a nurturing ethos across the school and is supporting a positive climate for learning. The acting headteacher, supported by the local authority, has rightly explored the concept of 'learner engagement' with staff to ensure a shared understanding. This has been supported well through the use of pupil observation profiles and pupil discussion records. As a result, teachers are more aware of the importance of active learning.
- In almost all classes, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. At times, these are overly lengthy and result in children being passive for some time in lessons. In a minority of lessons, teachers demonstrate skilled use of questioning to support children to develop higher order thinking. This practice should be shared more widely across the school so that children are required to demonstrate higher level skills more regularly and consistently.
- Lessons throughout the school have clear objectives. They are well structured with introductions to share the learning outcomes with children, explanations that clearly highlight the main points, and plenaries to review the key ideas. In most lessons, tasks and activities are well matched to the needs of children.
- We have asked the acting headteacher and staff to review the impact that time allocated to other activities such as daily routines and snack, has on children's learning.
- Teachers assess progress constantly as part of daily learning and teaching. They do this, for example, by watching and listening to learners carrying out tasks i.e. observational assessment, by looking at what they write and make, by considering how they answer questions, scanning work for pupil development and marking children's work. This is of variable quality. We have asked staff to use a wider range of evidence based on breadth, challenge and application of learning to determine if a learner has achieved a level. In key areas of the curriculum, assessment evidence is overly geared towards narrow requirements of a pre-defined check-up or written test. Much remains to be done to ensure that children are aware of their strengths and next steps in learning.
- Teachers have taken part in moderation activities within the Lanark Learning Community. This is supporting the development of a shared understanding of standards for aspects of literacy and English language. Teachers report improved confidence as a result of moderation activities. It would be worthwhile for teachers to engage with the moderation cycle and work with a wider range of schools within the local authority to support the reliability of professional judgements. This has the potential to support higher expectations of standards.
- Current arrangements for monitoring and tracking progress allow children who are off track to be identified and appropriate interventions to be put in place. We have asked teachers to

streamline their approaches to monitoring and tracking progress. There is a need for a whole school approach to how teachers monitor and track children's progress in line with national guidance.

- Given the size of school, the high turnover in staff has had an impact on the overall quality of teaching, which is variable across the school. The acting headteacher should continue with efforts to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning, teaching and assessment in order to bring about greater consistency of practice. A focus on pedagogy and understanding how children learn will support efforts to raise attainment.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers are using the experiences and outcomes to plan learning, teaching and assessment. They have begun to devise learning pathways for aspects of literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. They welcomed the discussion around the importance of curricular progression, coherence and links to attainment. At the moment, teachers have created 'individual targets' from benchmarks and use these as progression pathways. These are in place for selected stages across the school. We have asked teachers to use existing learning pathways that are in place across the local authority. This will help them to identify clear lines of progression across all curricular areas.
- When planning for learning, teaching and assessment, children should be provided with more opportunities to apply their knowledge and understanding from across the different organisers in both literacy and numeracy. Making explicit links between associated experiences and outcomes will support learners to make connections and apply their knowledge in different contexts.
- It would be helpful for learners and staff to make reference to the skills that children are expected to develop as they progress through the curriculum. This would contribute to the development of a shared understanding of standards across the school and assist in strengthening the moderation cycle.
- Given the distributed nature of leadership across the school, a teacher has taken ownership of implementing 1 + 2 modern language provision. French is delivered across all stages of the school with Spanish as the second language. Teachers are responsive to the cultural context of the school and have also introduced Polish at selected stages of the school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- See Choice QI

## 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

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

- There is a positive, nurturing culture in Rigside Primary School and all staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the wellbeing of learners. There is clear reference to rights respecting learning. This is visible across the school through class charters and displayed behaviours by the children. As a result, almost all children and staff show consideration for others and can demonstrate positive behaviour and relationships.
- The acting headteacher has prioritised relationships within the school community, which has resulted in a climate of trust. As a result, children feel safe and have a sense of security. Children know they can speak to any member of staff if they are worried or upset about anything. All stakeholders are welcomed into the 'Rigside Family'. As a result of the 'open door' approach, families are more willing to engage with the school and seek support when needed. This helps to reduce potential barriers that may impact on children's ability to learn.
- Staff have a detailed knowledge of individual children and their families and the potential challenges they face. The acting headteacher engages with a number of partners to develop children's emotional wellbeing. As a result, children demonstrate increased self-regulation skills. There is a calm atmosphere across the school which helps children to engage well with others. All partners feel that their close association with the school is working well.
- Almost all children have a good understanding of the language of wellbeing. There is particular emphasis on being safe, nurtured, respected, responsible and included. They are reflective and able to cite improvements to their wellbeing. Staff should now consider how to regularly encourage children to reflect on their wellbeing throughout the year and identify strengths and areas for improvement. The acting headteacher has identified areas related to health and nutrition which will also be developed.
- Staff engage well in professional learning to support children's wellbeing. There is an increased understanding of nurture across the school which helps support children to develop further their resilience. This has resulted in a reduction in the rates of exclusion in recent years. Commendably no children have been excluded this session.
- Senior leaders and all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities related to statutory duties. They track and monitor the progress of all learners including those with additional support needs who have an Additional Support Plan. Staff set appropriate targets which are shared with parents. These plans are revisited regularly and targets are reviewed by all. There is evidence that children are making good progress against targets detailed in these plans.

- The acting headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality regularly. She works closely with partners to deal with and monitor any issues that arise. This has resulted in improvements in the attendance rate across the school.
- The progress of care experienced learners is monitored and evaluated. Due consideration is given to children in line with legislative requirements such as the consideration of a coordinated support plan.
- Teachers plan and deliver lessons that explore diversity and promote respect for others. Children learn about relationships, sexual health and parenthood at each level. In Religious and Moral Education and through assemblies, learners celebrate difference and learn to challenge discrimination. Children can explain how gender stereotypes are tackled through sport and in the world of work. Children show a good understanding of their rights and almost all children feel they are treated fairly and with respect. There is now a need to review and evaluate the approaches to diversity and equality. This will support children to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts relating to this.

### 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

- There are cohorts in this school fewer than ten children; therefore, the statements about progress which have been made ensure the anonymity of individuals. It is also worth noting for a number of individual children with barriers to learning, there is evidence of improvements in attainment in the widest sense.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

##### Listening and talking

- Overall, children's attainment in talking and listening is good. At early level, children give brief responses when asked questions. They follow simple instructions and share their ideas with a wider audience. At first level, children take turns and contribute at appropriate times. They listen respectfully and communicate clearly and audibly. They respond well to different types of questions. At second level, children show respect for the views of others and contribute a number of relevant ideas. There is potential for children to build on the contributions of others by asking for clarification.

##### Reading

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is satisfactory. At early level, children use knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words and use context clues to support their understanding. They ask and answer questions about events and ideas in a text and contribute to discussions about characters and events. At first level, the majority of children explain preferences for a particular author. They read aloud adding expression and describe the main ideas of texts, offering ideas about characters and setting. At second level, the majority of children apply a range of reading skills to help them understand the text. They recognise techniques used to influence the reader and read with fluency and expression using appropriate pace and tone. Children should now be challenged to give deeper personal responses to chosen texts and justify these appropriately with supporting evidence.

##### Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is weak. At early level, the majority of children form most lower case letters correctly and are beginning to attempt to spell words accurately. At first level, the majority of children plan and organise ideas using an appropriate format. They have a knowledge of punctuation but do not yet apply this. At second level, a few children use paragraphs independently to separate ideas and attempt to engage the reader with appropriate vocabulary. They are not yet writing using correct punctuation or including all relevant information, ideas and knowledge. Children across first and second level need regular opportunities to write independently across a range of short and extended texts.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. At upper stages of the school, attainment is good.

## **Number, money and measurement**

- Across the school, children are developing their understanding of place, value and number processes well. Children are able to explain the link between digit, place and value. Across early level, children are able to recall number sequence forwards and backwards within a given range. They are also able to double numbers. Across both early and first level, children's fluency in mental processes through a sound knowledge of key number facts should continue to be developed. They are not confident in using strategies to solve mental calculations. As a result, the numeracy coordinator has developed a clear and shared approach to methodology. Across all stages of the school, children are not proficient at fractions. At second level, children are able to round whole numbers including the use of decimals. Children have a good knowledge and understanding of measurement and estimation and rounding across the school.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, children are able to recognise and describe 2D shapes. By upper stages of the school, their knowledge is well developed. They are able to use the language of shape, position and movement confidently. At the middle stages of the school, children's knowledge of angle, symmetry and transformation requires development.

## **Information handling**

- Children at early level and second level have a good understanding of information handling skills. They are able to display findings in different ways. A greater level of challenge is required across the school so that they are analysing and drawing conclusions from a variety of data sets.

## **Attainment over time**

- It is problematic to draw conclusions about patterns and trends of attainment over time given the numbers of children at P1, P4 and P7.
- The acting headteacher recognises the need to continue to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy.

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

- Children are developing their skills very well through a range of learning and leadership opportunities. The school offer a commendable range of contexts that allow children to achieve very well. This takes into account the context of Rigside, in particular, the isolation of the village and cost of travel. Children speak very enthusiastically about the gains from additional experiences such as swimming that is offered to all, and a wide range of trips that is enhancing the cultural aspects of learning. All children participate in pupil leadership groups focusing on various aspects of the life of the school. As a result, they are growing in confidence and developing valuable skills as they embrace these leadership opportunities. There is an action plan that is produced by children and evaluated to demonstrate progress. The majority of children participate in a range of sporting activities after school which helps to develop their fitness. Staff use work linked to 'eco schools' to help develop children's understanding of sustainable development. As a result, children have increased the amount of recycling across the school. The school is tracking children's achievements very effectively and putting in place strategies to ensure that no child misses out. Each individual child has an achievement profile that captures the successes measured by certificates and awards, participation in out of class activities and additional achievements at home.

## Equity for all learners

- The school's approach to equity has important strengths. All staff and partners demonstrate a clear understanding of the socio economic background of all children and seek to provide appropriate supports to address individual children's needs. This is having a significant positive impact for individual children who have significant barriers to learning. They know the community well and respond quickly to ensure equity for all. This has led to a review of the cost of the school day with the whole school community. As a result, a variety of wider experiences are provided for all pupils, at no additional costs to families, including swimming for every child, museum trips, theatre visits and outdoor learning. This ensures that all children have the opportunity to develop skills for life. Families are benefitting from the school's approach to equity. In particular, the school's approach to offering children a wide range of experiences outwith Rigside mitigates against the significant cost of travel for many families. In addition, the school also provide a free summer club offering children and families breakfast and lunch. This is an important aspect of provision given that there is only one local store.
- The acting headteacher uses the Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to support a range of needs across the school. Additional staffing from a range of third sector agencies has been allocated to support children's wellbeing. This has resulted in an increase in children's resilience and readiness to learn. The school has established partnership working across different third sector agencies and the local high school to support transition. This has led to an increase in attendance of children who attended Rigside School. The acting headteacher should continue to monitor the impact of these different interventions to ensure there is clear evidence of improved outcomes for children.

## Choice of QI: 2.7 Partnerships

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

- The acting headteacher works well with the school community to build positive and productive partnerships based on a shared vision. This has led to a strong ethos of trust. Relationships between parents, partners and the school are a key strength of the school. The acting headteacher has commendably worked hard to develop these. She knows the school community well and makes effective use of the different partners to ensure that they meet the needs of children and their families.
- Partners report that they are warmly welcomed and treated with respect by all staff and children in the school. They feel they are part of the 'Rigside team' and that their contribution is valued. They can readily identify the impact of their contributions. A number of partners work collaboratively to support children's transition to high school. This has allowed children and parents to explore any potential barriers and address these before they impact on attendance.
- The acting headteacher and staff have worked well with a wide range of partners to promote positive attitudes and resilience. Enhanced support from agencies specialising in emotional wellbeing has helped children across the school to develop a range of strategies to support self-regulation. Partners also provide professional learning to staff which helps enable them to continue to support children and their families. As a next step, staff and partners plan to work with parents to offer support in relation to children's emotional wellbeing.
- Parental and community engagement is a key priority for the school. Staff involve the local community in 'team build days' and curricular events to help increase participation in the life of the school. Teachers identify additional opportunities for parental engagement across the year. The Parent Council engage with the school on a regular basis. They run meetings during the school day to accommodate the needs of the parental body. They work closely with the acting headteacher to support school projects and funding where necessary. Parents are well informed of the work and life of the school.

## 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.