

# Summarised inspection findings

**Culross Primary School**

Fife Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

Culross Primary School serves the area of Culross, Low Valleyfield and Shiremill in Fife. At the time of the inspection, there are 36 children in two multistage composite classes. A number of children enter the school following placing requests.

The school is part of a partnership with Torryburn Primary School which is two miles away. There is a headteacher across both schools.

### 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

- Across all stages of the school, children benefit from the very caring and nurturing environment for learning. All staff work hard to ensure happy inclusive relationships. The school community has recently reviewed the school aims to reflect the culture and ethos within the school. The development of children's awareness of their rights, and the importance of being a responsible member of the community are important aspects of children's learning. Almost all children are happy in their learning and proud of their school. Older children can talk confidently about their rights.
- Most children are active and eager participants in their learning and find lessons enjoyable. They understand the purpose of their learning, and in a few lessons, are given opportunities to lead their own learning through a range of well-planned activities. They work well in pairs and groups. There is scope to ensure all learning activities are better differentiated to provide appropriate pace and challenge for all children. A few children can become distracted when learning is too easy or too hard for them.
- Senior pupils have opportunities to engage in positions of responsibility such as Head Girl/Boy and house captains. Children talk positively about the skills they learn when undertaking these roles. The school should continue to provide children opportunities to take on positions of responsibility and to influence decision-making at school and class level.
- Children at the early stages have good opportunities to learn through play, providing experiential and collaborative learning. Children are learning important skills of exploration, problem solving and discovery. The school plans to develop play-based learning further, taking full advantage of all learning spaces and the outdoor environment.
- Outdoor learning is an effective feature of the school and supports children to engage progressively in their learning. Children recognise that being outdoors can contribute to their wellbeing. They talk enthusiastically about how being outdoors helps them to learn about

healthy lifestyles and to keep fit. The school plans to develop its outdoor learning pathway further to ensure a clear progressive framework for learning.

- Staff use digital learning effectively to enhance children's learning experiences. They provide access to ICT for all classes and a number of tablet computers are also available for classroom use. Children are given the opportunity to produce graphics, research and investigate personal topics, explore internet safety and access games based learning activities. The school is at the early stages of developing a clear framework for digital technologies to develop further digital skills in a clear and progressive manner.
- Learning is enriched for children as they learn to speak Mandarin throughout all year groups. The school is the Confucius Primary Classroom for Fife. Children in the early stages are learning greetings, how to express their emotions and welcome visitors to their classroom. In the upper stages, children benefit from a progressive 12-week programme focusing on Chinese culture and where they are developing an understanding of Chinese culture and language. The school plans to develop further progression pathways in Mandarin and the assessment of children's progress across the school. Staff plan to involve parents further in children's learning experiences in Mandarin.
- Children experience a good range of teaching approaches that match the needs of most learners. In a few lessons, staff used questioning skilfully to elicit a range of responses from children. In the best examples, this went beyond direct questioning enabling children to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. We have asked the school to continue with its plans to build on this work and embed it in all lessons.
- Teachers make good use of an appropriate range of assessment information from day-to-day observations of learning, pupil work, planned assessments at specific points in time and standardised assessments. They use the information from these assessments to plan next steps for learners. Staff should now continue to build on this practice to plan assessments in a more holistic way. This will better help them assess how well children are able to apply their knowledge and skills in new and unfamiliar contexts. They should continue to improve their skills in analysing a range of data evidence. Staff have started to develop more confidence in making reliable judgements about children's attainment, including the use of National Benchmarks. They should continue with plans to deepen their understanding of the National Benchmarks and further establish and develop the process of rigorous moderation to secure better outcomes for children. Further use of recently introduced curricular pathways will bring better progression and consistency of expectations across the school.
- Across the school, written and verbal feedback about learning is beginning to help children understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. There is scope for staff to ensure children have an active role in responding to feedback, and in using this to set their own learning targets for improvement. Children are developing an understanding of their next steps in learning through 'Time to Talk' sessions with teachers. Teachers should continue to develop approaches which ensure children understand their learning targets. In doing so, children will be better informed about what they have achieved and the next steps in learning. While children have some opportunities for self and peer assessment, these could be developed further. This will help children to provide their peers with more focussed feedback on learning.
- Teachers' planning has been reviewed to take account of national and local guidance. Children can talk confidently about their involvement in their learning and recognise the impact their inputs have on the learning and teaching experiences. Children are encouraged

to take ownership of their learning and work collaboratively to support and further extend learning experiences across the curriculum. Termly tracking and monitoring meetings with staff have an increasing focus on children's learning. Effective systems are in place to track and monitor children's progress across literacy and numeracy. These include ongoing information based on summative and diagnostic assessments. The school should continue with plans to develop further local tracking and monitoring processes across the curriculum.

## 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

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

- It is important to note that every cohort in this school is fewer than ten children; therefore, statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individuals.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is at the appropriate level. Children who face barriers to their learning are making very good progress in meeting their personal targets. Almost all children are on track to achieve relevant Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy by June 2019.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall children's attainment in literacy and English is on track to achieve relevant Curriculum for Excellence levels. Children with additional support needs are making very positive progress in their learning.

#### Listening and talking

- Most children are making appropriate progress in listening and talking, with a few children making very good progress. The school has recently introduced a progressive framework for listening and talking in order to raise attainment further. Teachers should continue with their plans to embed further the teaching of listening and talking across the school.
- Towards the end of the early stages, children listen well to explanations and information. They are developing their ability to take turns and to listen to others. Children at the middle stages are encouraged to develop their listening skills through positive reinforcement. A few children could identify what makes a good listener. All children should be encouraged to identify and apply these skills more effectively. Children are confident to share their views. Children at the upper stages of the school express their views articulately and can discuss features of a range of texts.

#### Reading

- Across the school, reading is very good. Almost all children across the school enjoy reading in class and for pleasure, and are confident and motivated in discussing their choices. They have opportunities to make personal choices at appropriate levels of challenge, for what they like to read. Staff have introduced a wider range of reading materials and approaches, and these strategies are improving children's comprehension skills and understanding of grammar across the stages. Staff have introduced strategies to ensure children are accessing reading at appropriate levels and that these suit their individual needs. Staff should continue to seek ways to make better use of ICT-based reading materials to ensure that all children are accessing a relevant range of reading materials, so that they remain

interested, engaged and challenged. This will help to improve the transfer of literary techniques from children's reading to aspects of their writing.

- At the early stages, children are learning to identify common words, and use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. They use a number of strategies to decode unfamiliar words and use a range of word recognition strategies. They make good use of the text and illustrations to describe the main events of their reading book. Children are enthusiastic readers who read well for their age and stage.
- Children in the middle stages are becoming fluent readers who show understanding of texts they have read. They can read aloud familiar pieces of texts showing understanding, and are beginning to use expression. Learners can use a variety of decoding skills to read familiar words. They can use what they know about how words are built to attempt unfamiliar words and texts. Children can contribute to discussion about events, characters and ideas relevant to texts. They understand the features of fiction and non-fiction texts. They can talk about books their favourite author has published and describe how the author uses writing to convey feelings and emotions.
- By the upper stages, children understand the purpose and main ideas of a text. They are confident and fluent readers. They are able to apply a range of reading skills and strategies to read and understand texts. For example, skimming, scanning, and predicting. Children are confident in trying to apply literary techniques from their reading, into aspects of their writing.
- Children in the upper stages can talk about the differences and similarities between books by the same author. They can justify their opinions about their favourite books and discuss their thoughts with peers. They enjoy using the school library and appreciate recent investments in extended reading material.

## Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is very good. Children have opportunities to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum. For example, younger children are creating leaflets for tourists visiting Culross. Older children can write with success more extended pieces for a range of purposes with good grammatical accuracy. They can use confidently a variety of literary techniques. This is helped by a number of strategies and helpful prompts displayed around classrooms, which children can access easily.
- At the early stages, children can use a pencil with increasing confidence and control, and most can form lowercase letters. They can form letters legibly and can write their first name. Children at the early stages are beginning to write sentences starting with a capital letter and finishing with a full stop. They are able to use finger spaces to ensure that their writing is legible, although characters can be overly large and not sitting correctly on the line. Children attempt to spell known words correctly.
- At the middle stages, children can start sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader and can spell most commonly used words correctly. They are able to use their knowledge of word structures to attempt unfamiliar words. Children are able to write sentences using appropriate punctuation such as full stops, commas, question marks and exclamation marks. They link sentences to create a story using adjectives and verbs.

- By the upper stages, children can write for a range of purposes such as lists, instructions, letters and imaginative stories. They understand that writing for different audiences requires different writing styles. When writing for pleasure children can use their knowledge of genre, style and structure to create interesting and thought provoking stories. They can link sentences using a range of conjunctions. Learners can successfully write more extended pieces for different purposes with increasing accuracy, using a range of literary techniques that they have acquired from materials provided by their class teacher.
- There is scope to improve handwriting further across the school to ensure that it is legible and well presented.

### **Attainment in numeracy and mathematics.**

- Overall children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is on track to achieve relevant Curriculum for Excellence levels. Children with additional support needs are making very positive progress in their learning.

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

- Across the school, most children have a good understanding of place value and number processes. At the early stages, children can order numbers forwards and backwards within 20. They are developing confidence in solving simple missing number addition problems. At the middle stages, children use their understanding of place value to perform calculations. They can recognise a wide range of numbers, and use these and known number facts to solve problems. Across the upper stages, children are developing confidence when working with fractions, decimals and percentages and can carry out simple algebraic equations. Overall, children at all stages have an understanding of both money and measurement and can carry out calculations appropriate to their stage of development.

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

- At the early stages, children are confident in sorting and identifying common 2D shapes and 3D objects. Children working at the middle stages can describe the properties of these well. They can also recognise and create symmetrical pictures and designs. At the upper stages, children are able to name a range of angles and use coordinates to describe the location of a point on a grid.

### **Information handling**

- Children at the early stages can use their knowledge of colour, shape, size and other properties to match and sort items. Across the middle stages, children are knowledgeable about gathering information and using graphs. They are able to identify a variety of ways to collect and display data. By the upper stages, children are familiar with presenting information in different ways such as bar graphs and pie charts.

### **Problem solving**

- Across the school, children are encouraged to solve problems through mathematical challenges. These challenges should continue to be developed to ensure children require to draw on the full range of problem solving strategies. Opportunities for children to work individually and cooperatively to show and talk through their thinking, will enhance their ability to identify the most efficient strategy for different types of tasks.

### **Attainment over time**

- Due to the small numbers of children at each stage within the school, data cannot accurately define trends over time in attainment. Based on teachers' judgements, data from assessments, and tracking and monitoring, there is evidence that most children have made good progress over time in their attainments in literacy and numeracy in recent years. As



planned, the school should now focus on developing further approaches that will help to continue to raise attainment.

- The school tracks children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Regular tracking meetings between teachers, support for learning staff and the headteacher have an increasing focus on children's progress and attainment.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Children's achievements in school, and from home, are recognised and celebrated through assemblies and school displays. Children are proud of their achievements, particularly in sporting events and through the work achieved in school committees and 'Fit Groups' and achieving their Silver Sport Award. The school is tracking children's achievements within and out with school. In moving forward, the school should include a focus on the skills and attributes that children acquire across all aspects of their learning. This will better help children to identify and build on their own personal targets and monitor progress towards these.
- Children are developing important skills in caring for the environment through the number of achievement awards. Children, across the early stages, are working towards the school's achievement of the Natural Connections Award. Older children are working towards the John Muir Award. Children across the school contribute to the community through working in the community garden. Educational visits to a science centre, police headquarters and to a television studio are all enhancing children's learning.
- A range of clubs is provided for children, including keep fit, dance, craft and recorder. These are well attended and children speak very positively about the benefits of these activities. The school offers children the opportunity to select and participate in weekly 'Fit' clubs. These encourage children to develop a wider range of interests and skills. The school has four green flags for their work in improving the environment and has achieved level one accreditation in Rights Respecting Schools. Staff and children are working towards achieving their gold Sport Scotland Award. Wider achievements are supported well by members of the school community.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The school actively seeks ways to ensure equity of opportunity for all children. All members of staff know the children and their families well. The headteacher and staff are proactive in ensuring all children participate in all aspects of school life. The school has links with the wider community which enable children to take part in community events such as Culross Gala Week, the intergenerational group, beach cleaning and maintaining the Culross Community Garden. These opportunities are valued highly by all.
- The school currently receives additional resources from the Pupil Equity Fund and senior leaders have directed this funding to aspects identified through their self-evaluation processes. For example, the school is funding additional resources to support literacy.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

### **Mandarin in Primary Schools**

Culross Primary is the Primary Confucius Classroom for Fife. Queen Anne High School is the Secondary hub. Teachers, resources and running costs are funded by the Chinese Government, Hanban, and the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools. This allows pupils across the Queen Anne High School cluster to benefit from developed knowledge and understanding of Chinese language and culture. Each year, Hanban sends Chinese teachers to Fife who are fully supported and mentored by the staff at Culross Primary. Their timetables are arranged to ensure all P7 children across the cluster are taught a progressive 12 week programme which provides children with rich learning opportunities to explore Chinese language and culture. In addition, Culross has worked collaboratively with the Chinese teachers to plan and deliver immersion day experiences for over 500 children across the cluster.

### **A view from the school**

Culross Primary School is the Primary Mandarin Hub for Fife and has achieved great success over the last three years locally, nationally and globally. They have developed a 12 week programme for cluster schools and have hosted immersion days for a significant number of children and staff. Work is already underway to ensure Mandarin is taught throughout the school with clear progression and challenge for all learners. The school is leading projects with local historical landmarks to encourage Chinese visitors to learn more about Scotland and the impact on children's learning from P1-7 in terms of language, culture, diversity and creativity has been recognised by parents, partners and the wider community. Culross are keen to share and develop practice further, locally and nationally, and welcome further partnership working in the future.

## 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.