

# Summarised inspection findings

**St John's RC Primary School**

**Fife Council**

**SEED No: 5445027**

**27 February 2018**

## Key contextual information

Saint John's is a Roman Catholic denominational school located in the town of Rosyth. It has a roll of 249 pupils arranged in 10 classes within two open plan wings. The single storey school opened in 1988. The catchment area is wide and varied serving Rosyth, Inverkeithing, Hillend, Dalgety Bay, Aberdour, Limekilns and a growing area of the Dunfermline Eastern Expansion.

The SIMD ranges from 2-10. FMR is 20%. There are 23 children from military families. There are 22 pupils whose main home language is not English.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

- A strength of the school is the strong leadership of the headteacher and his very positive relationships with staff, parents and children. This is supporting the caring Catholic ethos across the school and motivates all staff in their own professional learning and in their involvement in improvement. Children are at the centre of the school's work and there are clear and high expectations of all. All staff at Saint John's work closely as a collegiate team with a very good understanding of the specific aspects of the school which require change and improvement.
- Staff have a well organised structure for the school improvement plan and also for strategies to lead change and improvement. The headteacher manages the nature and pace of change very well. He ensures that staff are selective of initiatives, to ensure all change activity is focused on improving outcomes for children. All staff, parents and partners are fully supportive of this vision for change. The staff team has worked effectively to evaluate progress and to agree the five key areas which will help drive forward school improvement.
- Staff work collaboratively with their associated schools to develop a shared vision for all of the children and young people in the community of Saint Columba's school cluster. The headteacher has been careful to prioritise specific areas from the cluster plans which are unique to the setting of the Saint John's Primary School. He and his staff team are continuing to measure the impact of the changes to determine the level of improvement. One of the planned strategies for measuring improvement includes the roll out of the Model for Improvement (MFI) to all staff. This should enable them to provide evidence of where changes are leading to improvements. Initially, staff are planning to use the MFI to measure the impact of the targeted Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to support greater equity. It

would be helpful to include children in the discussions about whole school improvement and how to measure the impact of changes. This will involve them more fully in driving the school forward.

- Staff at all levels are aware of the social and economic context of the school and this enables them to support children to be fully included in every aspect of school life. The school values of 'Faith, Respect, Kindness and Achievement' are clearly evidenced in the everyday interactions between children, staff, partners and visitors to the school.
- The headteacher is carefully managing the pace of change and should continue to include all staff and pupils in making plans for improvement and change. The headteacher has also encouraged staff professional reading in order to develop learning and understanding. This is enabling staff to focus on key areas of improvement and to make sure there is a measured impact on outcomes for children.
- To support the drive for improvement, all staff are included in leadership of one aspect of change and this is organised within the structure of RACI groups. (Responsible, Accountable: Consulted: Included). A few support staff are also included in leading change and this good practice could be further developed to include all staff in an area of improvement.
- A few children are involved in leadership roles such as buddies and peer mediators. The approaches used by the school are enabling pupils to have a voice in shaping the direction of the school. There is scope to further develop pupil leadership, for example through the pupil council. They could also find other ways of enabling all children to have a voice in the school vision by having a leadership role of some kind.
- The school has very good plans to drive its vision for change and improvement. The headteacher has ensured that he has included all of the key aspects of leadership of change, from establishing teams, communicating the plans, generating short term wins, through to consolidating change and making plans to anchor these in the new culture. All of these are having a positive impact on outcomes for children.

## 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 the school the caring ethos and very positive relationships between staff and learners illustrate the commitment to children's rights. Children have opportunities to contribute to the life of the school, take on leadership roles and develop the four capacities through a variety of pupil groups, for example House Huddles and pupil council.
- Almost all children are eager and keen to learn. Children are attentive during direct teaching and, when given the opportunity to do so, work well together in pairs and small groups. Teachers need to increase the pace and challenge of learning. There should also be a greater focus on the voice of children within lessons. In addition there is scope to develop further opportunities for children to lead their learning and develop greater independence as learners. This would enable children to have a stronger understanding of learning and to build on their attainment at an appropriate pace.
- In the most effective activities children are involved in setting success criteria. This helps children understand the purpose of their learning. Staff should build on this good practice to ensure all children clearly understand the purpose of their learning and can use it to assess what they have done well and what they need to improve. Staff are aware of the need to ensure that this feature of learning and teaching is well paced, to ensure children have sufficient time to engage in and complete their learning tasks.
- Learning targets for each curricular area are evident in reflective diaries and in pupil work. In a few classes, children regularly assess their own progress against their individual targets. To ensure a consistent approach across the school, all children would benefit from regular learning conversations to review their specific targets to ensure clear understanding of their progress in learning.
- Children would benefit from having wider opportunities to use digital technologies in class to enhance and extend learning across the curriculum and to offer children more choice in how they use digital tools.
- A few staff use well considered questions to reinforce and extend learning. Staff should now ensure that higher-order questioning is used to deepen learning and is developed more consistently across the school.

- Approaches such as self and peer assessment are enabling children to reflect on and evaluate their own progress in learning. There now needs to be a clearer focus on using assessment to plan well timed interventions to support or extend learning. Assessment evidence should inform planning and enable staff to ensure appropriate support and challenge.
- As staff move forward in improving approaches to planning learning, teaching and assessment they should ensure children have planned opportunities to apply their learning across the four contexts.
- A system to track and monitor children's progress is in place and is supporting the leadership team to track the attainment of individual children in literacy and numeracy. Through termly planning and tracking meetings, teachers identify children who require further support or challenge. The headteacher also recognises that the tracking system should now be extended across the curriculum to make sure that learners are progressing in learning across all areas. Staff support children with additional needs well. Learning assistants provide children with effective support and there are clear plans and targets for children who need extra help with their work. Targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy are planned for specific groups of children through the Pupil Equity Fund. The school should continue to measure the impact of these supports in order to gauge improvement in reading, writing and number work.
- The headteacher recognises the need to continue to support all staff in making professional judgements about children's progress towards achieving a level. Staff should continue their planned collegiate moderation activities in their improvements across teaching and assessment. This will enable teachers to be absolutely clear about current attainment and how to extend learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

Please see the choice QI at the end – QI 2.2 Curriculum.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- Parents and partners are highly positive about their inclusion and involvement in the life of the school. In particular, they appreciate the caring and supportive ethos across the school. Parents commented positively on the collaborative nature of the staff group where everyone works together as a single team to provide the best experience for their children. They are complementary of the very positive relationships with the headteacher.
- A majority of parents feel that communication from the school is strong, for example they like the school social media page which keeps them informed of daily activities. There is scope to ensure that school and parent council information is shared widely with all stakeholders, particularly with those who may not be included in the social media link.
- Almost all parents were positive about the information and support they receive about their child's learning. A few however, would appreciate more and frequent updates on learning. In particular parents were positive about the Shared Learning Sessions (Shared Start and Shared Finish) which enabled them to experience learning activities and approaches in order to support their child's learning at home.
- Staff should continue as planned to include parents in supporting learning experiences, in particular to support skills for learning life and work activities in school. There is scope for the school to make more effective use of parental skills and knowledge to support and enhance children's learning around the world of work and future careers. Parents should also be included in the school's work to improve the curriculum.

## 2.1: Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.



### 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 very strong focus on wellbeing across all aspects of school life. The strong positive relationships between children and staff, and children with each other, supports wellbeing for all within the well-established Catholic ethos. This has a notable and positive impact on children's engagement in their learning. There is a focus on one area of wellbeing each month and as a result, children talk with confidence about all of the eight areas of wellbeing.
- Children have opportunities across the year to self-evaluate and record how they feel against the wellbeing indicators. Children tell us they feel safe, valued and respected in school. They tell us they have lots of friends, and that they can approach teachers should they need support. It is evident that this positive focus on wellbeing supports children's confidence in how they approach their learning. This focus on the school values contributes to a nurturing ethos across the school, and all children are included in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher, principal teacher (PT) and other members of staff model caring, respectful behaviours in their daily work. Children have regular opportunities to be active and there are high levels of participation in clubs before and after the school day. The school house system offers all children a voice in improving the school. For example, one house is actively engaged in improving play and learning outdoors. Children feel included in this activity, and feel it has wider reach than the current approach to pupil council meetings.
- The whole school focus on the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ensures children understand the articles, and have the opportunity each month to focus on a particular theme or right which is displayed around the school and discussed in classes and assemblies. Children understand that they have rights, and that they must respect the rights of others.
- The positive relationships across the school community include partnership working with the other faith schools across the cluster, as well as the primary schools within the local area. The school has strong relationships with partner agencies. These partners support improved wellbeing and learning for children who may face barriers to learning.
- School staff know children and their families very well. Staff are becoming more familiar with national priorities to remove barriers to attainment and achievement for individuals who may face challenges, including those affected by socio economic challenges. The school

takes effective steps to support children and families whose learning is interrupted, including military families. Staff and parents should continue to focus on the cost of the school day as they plan activities and events to enhance learning to make sure all children are fully included in all aspects of school life.

- The school takes full account of statutory requirements in their work to support all children. This includes appropriate use of coordinated support plans as required. Where children have individual plans and targets, these are well managed and agreed with parents and children. All plans are regularly reviewed and are used by class teachers to make sure support is appropriately targeted within classrooms. The focussed planning and clearly targeted support enables children to achieve their potential, leading to raised attainment and achievement as well as a strong sense of wellbeing for all.

### 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

- Data provided by the school shows that most children attain appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in numeracy and mathematics and literacy and English language. Inspection activity, including lesson observations, analysis of teacher professional judgement and standardised assessment data, work sampling and engaging with groups of children across the school, supports these school evaluations of attainment.
- Children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Curriculum for Excellence data over the last two years, and staff predictions for attainment this session, illustrate improving trends in attainment across literacy and numeracy. The school has accurately identified the need to improve writing, and aspects of numeracy and mathematics. Refreshed approaches are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of children's attainment in most classes. Teacher professional judgement predicts that most children are on track to attain nationally expected levels in all aspects of literacy by the end of session 2017/18.
- The school has identified attainment gaps in reading, writing, listening and talking and in numeracy. They have used PEF funding to increase staff to support children and families. This will enable staff to target specific work towards writing, to provide support for parents and to target support for numeracy. Interventions are at an early stage of implementation and the headteacher is aware of the need to closely monitor the impact.

#### Listening and Talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen well to information from adults. At the early stages almost all children demonstrate effective listening skills and participate well in simple conversations. When in small group discussions or one-to-one situations, most older children can discuss their personal views and opinions in an articulate manner.
- Across the school, children have a well-developed vocabulary and can talk in detail about subjects of interest to them.
- Children need more focussed opportunities to develop skills in listening and talking. Staff should now plan a consistent approach to planning for and assessing listening and talking. To promote progression and improvement, success criteria specific to listening and talking should be created with learners on a regular basis. This would support more regular learning experiences, improving children's confidence and developing skills progressively.

## **Reading**

- At the early stages children read aloud with confidence and are able to apply their phonics knowledge confidently to read and spell common words. In groups, children are able to discuss texts and share their likes and dislikes. As they progress through the school children read aloud with increasing confidence and fluency. Most learners use their knowledge of punctuation, grammar and vocabulary to add expression when reading. Learners are able to discuss settings, characters and main ideas, confidently. They can express their preference for a particular book and author and justify their choice. More able readers are engaging with more challenging texts.

## **Writing**

- Children at all stages write across a range of genres and for a variety of real life purposes. At the early stages almost all children can form letters legibly, spell common words and express their own experiences and ideas. Across the school children use a range of appropriate punctuation to structure their writing. Children within first level are developing confidence to write purposefully and with independence. By second level children are able to select the most appropriate writing format for a given purpose. Children now need more opportunities to apply their writing skills across learning. Across all stages children need to write with increased frequency, length and accuracy. The school should continue with its focussed approach to improving writing across the school.

## **Number money and measure**

- Led by the local authority, the whole school's approach to conceptual mathematics is supporting children to reach a deeper understanding of numeracy, and offers a range of strategies to use in their mental and written calculations.
- At early level, children use their empty number lines to support practice in addition. At first level children can add two-digit numbers using a range of chosen strategies. They can also write an appropriate 'story sum' around the same calculation. At second level children enjoyed exploring patterns and identifying a formula to explain the patterns.

## **Shape position and movement**

- At the upper stages, children can recognise and label a range of angles. They are developing accuracy in measuring and drawing angles. Children can talk with confidence about direction and compass points. Children are less confident in identifying the properties of shape and objects.

## **Information handling**

- It is evident that during the course of the year children experience appropriate learning around information handling. Teachers should continue to make sure that children have ongoing learning experiences in all aspects of information handling, in order to develop their skills.
- Overall, most children are developing very good skills in most aspects of numeracy. They are less confident across the other features/organisers in mathematics. There is scope to ensure children have the opportunity to regularly revisit and build on mathematical concepts.
- The whole school approach to teaching and learning in health and wellbeing is having a positive impact on children's progress in this area. At early level children are developing skills around social eating, and in using tools, cutlery and utensils with confidence. As

children progress through the school, they understand the links between good health, healthy eating and pursuing an active life. Children have a good understanding of aspects of health and wellbeing, they understand the impact on their body of substance misuse and can talk about how to be safe on the Internet.

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

- Children at all stages are confident in their engagement with each other, staff, and visitors. They are eager to talk about the roles they have in contributing to the life of the school and in working together to help the lives of others. Children have the opportunity to lead activities and take responsibility as part of the school house system. For example one group is leading on promoting Fairtrade, another organised an event in anti-bullying week. Children are developing a range of leadership and organisational skills in their roles as house captains, prefects, buddies and playground leaders. This includes organising activities, communicating well with their peers and younger children and talking to a range of audiences at assemblies. Children respect and care for the lives of others in their regular fund raising activities. This helps them to understand the lives and needs of others in Scotland and across the world as well as impacting on their overall achievement.
- Children develop skills and enjoy success in a range of after school clubs. They also enjoy participating in local sporting and cultural festivals. They talk with confidence about their success and recognise what they need to do to keep improving. The school and cluster promote and recognise children's leadership and citizenship skills in a bespoke accreditation programme. Older children work towards The Pope Francis Faith Award with a focus on skill development.
- Children share their achievements in and out of school during weekly assemblies. Success is also celebrated in wall displays photographs and tweets.
- Children experience a broad range of wider achievement. Staff track children's involvement and are alert to ensuring all children access opportunities to experience a range of activities. Children can talk confidently about the skills they are developing, for example, in sporting festivals. Children also use their reflection jotters to record achievement and their feelings about their success. These are used well to enable children to have an overview of the key skills of communication, organisation and leadership.

## School choice of QI : 2.2 Curriculum

- **Theme 1 Rationale and Design**
- **Theme 2 Development of the Curriculum**
- **Theme 3 Learning Pathways**
- **Theme 4 Skills for learning, life and work**

- The current curriculum rationale was designed in session 2015-16, involving learners, staff and parents. The school community place a strong emphasis on its Gospel values and these are central to the curriculum. They reviewed and refreshed their vision, values and aims in session 2016-17, involving the whole school community. Senior staff are aware that they now need to update the curriculum rationale in line with these changes. They should ensure that it reflects an aspirational vision, the unique context of the school and that it is clearly understood by all stakeholders.
- The school should build on the positive start made to providing opportunities for children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills more consistently across the curriculum.
- Current school practice is to review interdisciplinary learning (IDL) on an annual basis in partnership with learners. Staff are currently reviewing the bundling of experiences and outcomes to support relevance and coherence in learning. Opportunities for professional learning in the area of IDL would also ensure a more consistent understanding and lead to a coherent whole school approach.
- As the staff team continue to develop the curriculum, they should ensure effective engagement with parents and partners to ensure children experience relevance in their learning, and that they make full use of the skills and knowledge of the school community in supporting and enhancing children's experiences.
- Cluster progression pathways are used by teachers as part of their curricular planning process. Staff would now benefit from developing flexible learning pathways tailored to the needs of individuals and groups. This would ensure all learner needs are met within an appropriate pathway ultimately leading to raised attainment for all.
- There are opportunities for children to influence planning, mainly as part of IDL. This should now be extended to offer more opportunities for personalisation and choice across the curriculum. This will enable children to share their interests, identify how and what they would like to learn. Staff have arranged planned opportunities for children to develop skills in digital learning. They now need to ensure children have access to a wider range of opportunities to develop their digital skills in a progressive way across all curricular areas. Staff have identified the need to improve outdoor learning. Some staff are beginning to explore ways in which outdoor learning can enhance learning experiences across the curriculum. The school should continue with plans to address this as soon as possible.
- The school with its cluster is currently working on a *Developing the Young Workforce* programme. This is providing relevant and meaningful contexts for learning, life and work and opportunities for skills development. As part of this children had the opportunity to explore a range of careers, identify related skills and challenge some gender stereotypes as part of a skills week. Staff should continue with this positive start and further engage with the learning community to support children's skill development.

## 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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