

Summarised inspection findings

Barr Primary School

South Ayrshire Council

27 June 2023

Key contextual information

Barr Primary School is located within the conservation village of Barr, approximately eight miles from Girvan, in the southwest of Scotland. The school roll is 21 children across two multi-stage classes. All children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) four. The headteacher has been in post for six and a half years and is also the headteacher of Barrhill Primary School, in Barrhill.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Almost all children demonstrate confidence and engagement during learning activities. They are keen to share their ideas with staff and each other and contribute fully to class and group discussions. All classes have a warm, respectful and supportive ethos and relationships are very positive. Staff know children very well and are attuned to their needs.
- Teachers organise learning environments well. They reflect the personalities and interests of the children in the class. Teachers consult children about the layout of the classroom and the resources available. Children are proud of their input and have a strong sense of ownership of their learning environment. Older children understand the purpose of their class charter and can explain the importance of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) within the context of their school. Staff should support younger children to develop further their understanding of their rights.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers demonstrate the positive impact of their professional learning and are keen to develop and improve their approaches to teaching. In almost all lessons, teachers use effective questioning to elicit information from children and check their understanding. They encourage children to extend their answers and provide supporting detail. Teachers provide clear explanations and instructions and ensure that children understand what they are being asked to do.
- In almost all lessons, teachers support children to understand the purpose of learning and encourage them to make links to prior and future learning. This helps children to understand the relevance of activities and supports them to identify what they need to do to be successful. Teachers should now develop agreed and consistent approaches to communicating and recording intended learning and measures of success. This would help children to engage more effectively in self and peer evaluation.
- All teachers know children very well and have a very good understanding of the local context. They are clear about each child's individual learning journey and their needs. Children who

require additional support or challenge are supported very well by staff to make appropriate progress. Teachers meet all children's needs in literacy and numeracy lessons by using different approaches effectively. They provide regular and specific oral feedback on all children's learning and support them to identify next steps. Teachers provide helpful written feedback in children's jotters, most notably in relation to writing. There is a need to improve the consistency and quality of written or visual feedback across other areas of the curriculum. This would help children to review and reflect on their progress and support improvements in their learning.

- Teachers provide effective opportunities for children to take part in active learning and apply their skills in a range of contexts. They work very well with partners to support children's learning and development. This is having a positive impact on children's engagement. Teachers now need to develop shared expectations in relation to the presentation of written work and support children to improve in this area.
- All staff empower children to make decisions about their own learning. Teachers offer them numerous opportunities to personalise activities and identify what and how they would like to learn. Teachers are very responsive to the children's opinions and incorporate their ideas and requests into all aspects of learning. As a result, children are highly engaged and motivated.
- All children have individual learning targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They discuss their progress against these targets with staff. Children now need increased opportunities to review their progress regularly with adults or peers and capture aspects of their learning in their journals. This will help to ensure that targets are relevant and meaningful for children and support them to make improvements in their learning.
- Children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. They learn French and Scots throughout the school. They have benefited from opportunities to have taster sessions in Spanish and British Sign Language. The whole school community has worked together to develop the school grounds. Children enjoy taking their learning outdoors and applying skills in new contexts. All children receive their entitlement to two hours of Physical Education (PE). Teachers should review the timetabling of PE to ensure that arrangements facilitate the delivery of high-quality experiences. Teachers use digital technology effectively to support learning. As a next step, it will be important to ensure that children are given more opportunities to develop their own digital skills.
- Children at the early stages engage in free play every day and play is also incorporated into literacy and numeracy activities. Teachers provide appropriate encouragement and scaffolding to enable children to learn successfully through their play. Teachers should continue with plans to extend the use of play throughout the school. This should include developing approaches to assessing learning through play further and supporting children to understand the skills they develop. They should continue to engage in relevant professional learning and reflect on national practice guidance.
- Teachers use a helpful range of diagnostic, standardised and high quality assessments to gather information about children's progress and level of attainment in literacy and numeracy. They also complete wellbeing assessments with children every term. Teachers use effectively an appropriate balance of formative and summative assessment strategies as part of learning and teaching across the curriculum. They use all of the information gathered to target support,

inform planning and compile progress reports. All parents feel that they get regular feedback from teachers and that their children are making good progress with their learning.

- Teachers are becoming more confident in analysing data at class level to support their own professional judgements. They review children's progress and attainment regularly with colleagues in school to support the development of shared expectations. They engage in professional learning and moderation activities with colleagues in their partner school and across the cluster. This is helping to give them an improved understanding of national standards.
- Teachers plan effectively across all curricular areas using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. They ensure breadth, depth and personalisation of learning in their planning. Teachers follow a three-year cycle that takes account of the needs of multi-composite classes. They plan for groups, individuals and whole class activities, incorporating assessment at the planning stage. Teachers complete detailed evaluations at the end of each planning block and identify children's strengths and development needs. The headteacher should continue with plans to streamline approaches to planning, making use of digital formats as appropriate.
- The headteacher and teachers track each child's progress closely. They meet three times per year for formal discussions. They review the outcomes of assessments, share observations and evaluate the impact of approaches and supports that they have put in place. The headteacher and staff work very effectively with partner agencies to plan bespoke supports for children who face significant barriers to their learning. The headteacher has identified correctly the need to make the school's tracking processes more cohesive. She should collate all relevant information for improved access and easier analysis.

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.

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

- As this is a small school with two multi-stage composite classes, general statements about progress have been used to ensure children's anonymity.
- In June 2022, the majority of children across the school achieved expected CfE levels in literacy and English and most achieved in numeracy and mathematics.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the whole school, the majority of children are currently making good or very good progress towards achieving expected CfE levels in literacy and English. A few children are working beyond expected levels. The majority of children who require additional support for their learning in literacy are making good progress towards their own targets. A few are making very good progress.

Listening and talking

- Children working at early level are keen to contribute their ideas and opinions. They can take turns appropriately and listen to instructions and directions. At first level, children listen respectfully to adults and peers. During group and class discussions, they can share their own experiences and encourage others to do so. Children at second level ask and respond to a range of evaluative, inferential and factual questions. They build on the contributions made by others.

Reading

- At early level, children can retell familiar stories in their own words. They can recognise their own name and a few common words by sight. They require support to develop further their ability to blend sounds to read words. Children at first level can read familiar texts with fluency. They can identify the key features of non-fiction texts and answer literal questions based on what they have read. They need support to answer evaluative and inferential questions and create questions for others. At second level, children can summarise the main idea and identify sources of information that are reliable. They are familiar with figurative language techniques but need support to identify a range of examples within texts.

Writing

- Children at early level can create increasingly detailed drawings to support their story writing. They need more opportunities to write independently, develop their letter formation and use of finger spacing. Children working at first level can spell common words correctly and use their knowledge of phonics to make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. They need more opportunities to write at length. At second level, children can use paragraphs to organise their ideas and demonstrate understanding of the key features of a range of genre.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the whole school, the majority of children are making good progress towards achieving expected CfE levels in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children are making very good progress. A few are working beyond expected levels. Overall, children who require additional support for their learning in numeracy are making good progress towards their individual targets.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children can sequence numbers up to 20 and can add and subtract within 10. They now need support to develop their confidence and understanding when working with numbers up to 20 and improve their one to one correspondence when counting. Children at first level can solve simple algebraic equations and use their knowledge of multiplication and division to solve word problems. They need support to develop their understanding of estimation and units of volume and length. At second level, children can simplify a fraction and solve two step problems involving change. They can calculate profit and measure the duration of time. They are less confident when solving calculations that involve multiplication and division of numbers with two or three digits.

Shape, position and movement

- Children at early level recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They understand basic positional language such as above and below. At first level, children can draw a shape with a line of symmetry. They need to develop their knowledge of angles and extend their understanding of three-dimensional objects. Children at second level can recognise and name common three-dimensional objects but need to develop their understanding of nets. They can identify acute and obtuse angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children understand the purpose of data displayed in their classroom. They can sort items based on their own criteria and are developing their understanding of ways of recording data, such as tally marks. Children at first level can interpret a pictograph and answer questions based on data displayed. They require support to create their own questions. At second level, children can show data in a range of ways, such as charts and tables, and can identify the features of different formats. They would benefit from more experience of using digital technology to gather, analyse and present data.

Attainment over time

- The small roll and cohort size at Barr Primary School has influenced trends in attainment data over time. As a result, staff track the progress of individual children. Most children across the school are making good or very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The majority are making good or very good progress in literacy and English.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff display and celebrate children's achievements via displays, assemblies, online platforms, newsletters and the school website. This supports children to know that their achievements are valued by all. Children have opportunities to take part in concerts, shows, residential trips and community events. The Active Schools team organise after-school sports clubs for children. This provides the opportunity for children to learn and develop a range of physical skills. Teachers track attendance at afterschool clubs. As a next step, they should consider alternative timings and provision of clubs with links to other areas of the curriculum. This would help to encourage and increase the involvement of more children across the school.
- The school has achieved accreditation for work on rights-based learning and sports. Staff should now ensure all children are aware of their role in taking forward improvements and help

them to recognise the important skills they are developing through these activities. There is a need to review the organisation of the children's groups and committees to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate actively. The headteacher and teachers should be clear about the purpose of children's leadership roles. They should consider the best way to evidence the impact of children's contributions to school improvement.

Equity for all learners

- The Parent Council fundraises actively to ensure that all trips and activities are free of charge to all children. This is providing equity of opportunity for all. They consult with children and staff about the choice of trips. They take account of the need to offer activities that enrich the curriculum and develop cultural awareness. School staff and parents facilitate a uniform swap and provide additional clothing or footwear as required. This approach is helping to reduce the cost of the school day.

- The school receives a small amount of additional funding to support their efforts to reduce the poverty-related attainment gap. The headteacher, in consultation with the Parent Council, used the additional funding to support a mental health initiative within the school. Teachers and parents feel that this intervention has been helpful in addressing a range of wellbeing needs that have emerged post pandemic. The headteacher and teachers should now track carefully the impact of all interventions on the attainment of children most affected by their socio-economic circumstances. They should ensure that all additional funding is supporting those children to make accelerated progress in their learning.

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.