

Summarised inspection findings

Pencaitland Primary School and Nursery Class

East Lothian Council

17 March 2020

Key contextual information

Pencaitland Primary School is located in rural East Lothian. It is part of the associated schools group for Ross High School in Tranent. The school roll of 164 children, is arranged across seven classes. The school has spacious accommodation and a nursery class located in a separate building.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The experienced headteacher has been in post for eight weeks and has made a strong start to auditing the school's progress. She is clear about the improvement priorities necessary to bring about improved outcomes for children. In this short time, the headteacher has placed effective emphasis of the school's existing values. As a result, they are increasingly understood by staff and children. She is already gaining the respect and confidence of staff, parents and children through her assertive and approachable leadership style. The learning environment is welcoming and used well to provide opportunities for children to learn indoors and outdoors. The headteacher's recent appointment to her role significantly increases the school's capacity to improve further. The leadership team and staff team should now revisit and refresh the school's vision and values. There is a need to use these to inform the school's curriculum rationale more accurately and reflect its unique context.
- Individual teachers are developing an understanding of shared leadership. They take lead roles in areas of interest and to share their expertise and value opportunities to work together on school improvement priorities. This promising start to professional learning and dialogue includes increased focus on moderation and expected standards. There is a need to improve further their skills in assessment and moderation and learn from effective practice in other schools. In recent years, the staff team has developed learning outdoors and learning through play. Almost all children enjoy their learning experiences and play imaginatively together outdoors. Teachers should develop their professional enquiry approaches further to enable them to evaluate the impact play has on the quality of learning. They should now collaborate more regularly and take increased collective responsibilities for the school's improvement priorities.
- The headteacher rightly identifies the need to develop the school's approaches to self-evaluation. The education authority review of the school's work led to staff improving their skills of self-evaluation. The education authority has undertaken a review of the school's work in recent years. There signs that the staff are becoming more reflective in evaluating their practice. They worked together to define approaches to differentiation which enabled them to plan learning more effectively. They should continue to develop collegiate working and their collective responsibility for the process of change. In doing so, ensure high quality learning and teaching and progression in children's learning across the curriculum.

- The headteacher is developing systematic approaches to identify the learning needs of all children, provide appropriate interventions and monitor children's progress. In addition, the education authority supports the school with an enhanced staffing level for support for learning. The headteacher and staff should continue to audit the needs of children to inform and sustain the full remit of the support for learning role. There is a need to improve the school's support for learning provision to ensure the needs of all children are met well. Systematic and well-understood processes to identify, assess and support additional learning needs should be developed further and implemented across the school.
- A significant number of parents are interested in becoming more involved in their children's learning and to support learning at home. The headteacher and staff should review the school's approaches to include parents and consult widely with them to establish views and opinions to inform changes to learning at home. Staff need to work more consistently as partners with parents to ensure learning opportunities are maximised across the school.
- Children are increasingly involved in school improvements and are beginning to contribute to the school's self-evaluation through a variety of participation groups. They are motivated to take responsibilities and say they are listened to. This initiative is led well by the principal teacher who is bringing effective practices to the school from professional learning in other schools. The staff team should ensure children become increasingly reflective about learning and teaching across the school.
- The school has an appropriate focus on raising attainment in numeracy and literacy. The school has a clear improvement plan and progress is being made towards implementing change leading to improvement in literacy and numeracy. Teamwork across the whole staff team, including the nursery should be strengthened to ensure the pace of change is increased.

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

- There is an inclusive ethos and supportive environment for learning across the school. Overall, children have positive relationships with staff and their peers. Children interact well with one another when learning in class and playing together outdoors. Almost all children are very well behaved. They listen attentively and proudly demonstrate the school values of 'kindness' and 'respect'.
- Almost all children are motivated to learn. In most lessons, staff discuss with learners what they are learning and know when they are successful. In a few lessons, teachers ensure all children fully understand the purpose of learning. They match meaningful learning intentions to the needs of groups and children talk confidently about their learning. In a few effective lessons, children enjoy high quality learning experiences and are fully engaged in learning and have their thinking challenged well. In most lessons, pace and challenge needs to be increased as children are capable of engaging in learning that is harder for them. In too many lessons, the individual needs of learners are not met sufficiently well. Teachers have made a start to defining differentiated learning and developing teaching approaches to support learning in groups. They should continue to work together to reach a shared understanding of features of highly effective practice, ensuring all children experience high quality learning and teaching consistently across the school.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to encourage children to justify their answers so they are becoming skilled in explaining their thinking. They should share effective practices with one another and take more regular opportunities to observe the best practice. This will help improve consistency in implementing higher order thinking skills across the school. Teachers should continue to build on the contribution children make to planning learning and creating questions to which they would like to find answers.
- Teachers engage in professional learning and are currently implementing the school's approaches to learning through play. They successfully support the 'Mission Pencaitland Play' resulting in positive playground experiences. They should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of play indoors and introduce open ended, curious play across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence. The headteacher and staff should build on the start made to children developing skills in creativity and leading learning through collaboration. They need to ensure they have a clear and shared understanding of the pedagogy of play based learning.
- Teachers and children make regular use of digital technology to enhance teaching and support learning. Children create videos and consolidate their learning using laptop computers. Teachers should build their confidence further and widen the scope for digital technologies through ongoing professional learning.

- The headteacher is well focused on the improved use of assessment to build on children's prior learning. Assessment is now considered more meaningfully at the stage of planning for learning. This should be further developed to clarify the knowledge, understanding and skills children are developing and ensure progression of individuals and groups. Planning frameworks and benchmarks support curriculum pathways and teacher judgements about children's progress. A few teachers use formative assessment effectively to gauge next steps in learning. Children have personal assessment folders and include their own reflections about their learning. The school should now involve children in recording their targets and next steps in learning. They should have regular time to talk about their work and to identify and reflect on the evidence of their progress and their next steps.

- The headteacher is implementing rigorous approaches to monitoring and tracking. Analysis of the Scottish National Standardised Assessments informs teacher judgement and identification of focused support. Information on children's progress is systematically gathered and used well to audit needs. Senior leaders should now ensure effective support for children who have identified barriers to their learning leads to raised attainment and achievement for all. Moderation of standards is at an early stage of development and is currently an important focus for professional learning. Further development of moderation practices should lead to teachers having a shared understanding of standards and clear expectations about progression in learning through Curriculum for Excellence levels. Teachers are developing confidence in making increasingly robust judgements about children's progress

Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The curriculum rationale was developed in consultation with parents and children. It is now at the point of being refreshed to ensure the school's vision is supported by a curriculum that is more accurately relevant to the context of the school.
- East Lothian Council's curriculum pathways set out a progression for skills, knowledge and understanding. The school uses these in planning for children's learning and teaching activities. The school should ensure that planning provides clarity around the expected outcomes across all curriculum areas are defined. Staff require to plan to meet the needs of all learners effectively. Current forward planning meets the needs of the most of learners. Planning of differentiated learning for groups and individual learners needs to be clearer. The headteacher and staff should review the assessment and planning procedures further to ensure a coherent curriculum for all children throughout their learning journey.
- Outdoor learning is identified as a key pedagogical approach and an integral part of learning and teaching across the school. Staff should now consider how planning for outdoor learning reflects the experiences and outcomes across the curriculum. Developing the Young Workforce is well focused in planning for learning. Children are developing skills for future learning, life and work. This is especially successful at second level where children are encouraged to use their skills in talking, collaboration and creativity. Overall, the curriculum is supported well through a variety of visiting specialist teachers in music and PE, together with a wide range of partners.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The headteacher is building positive relationships with parents who recognise that the school is open to taking on board their ideas. The headteacher recognises the need to involve them more in the life of the school and their children's learning. The school has begun to support parents with their children's learning at home by providing after school sessions on numeracy. The school should continue to capitalise on the contribution parents can make to supporting children's progress and achievement both in school and at home.
- The school has worked closely with the Parent Council to source funding to provide a cycle track from the school to the high school to increase active travel to school in a safe manner. The parents and staff have worked effectively together to develop the school grounds and their use for learning opportunities. Children play responsibly together during break times.
- The school has built strong links with the minister of the local church, who is interested in developing all children's understanding of different faiths and build a curiosity in children.
- The school works closely with partners to increase children's knowledge and awareness of local facilities, active travel, bilingualism and inter-generational work. The school is working with Edinburgh University to evaluate the importance of understanding the impact on bilingualism, inter-generational activities, diversity, culture and social connections and language.

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

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The school has an inclusive ethos. Most children are happy at school and enjoy their learning experiences outdoors. They value their teachers and know how to get help when they need to. The school's value of respect is evidenced through positive relationships between teachers and children. A majority of children believe they treat others fairly and respectfully. The school should continue to develop its emphasis on values and build on its success in developing children's understanding of their rights consistently across all stages. Overall, relationships across the school are positive. The headteacher should engage all staff with partners to increase their knowledge of nurturing principles. Collectively they should build on the positive school ethos and take forward the development of a whole-school nurturing approach. The school is highly regarded in its community and learning outdoors is increasing the school's profile. Partners are positive about their involvement with the school and enhance children's learning. These partnerships and links are successfully developing children's understanding of the needs of others and skills for work.
- Children are becoming increasingly involved in the work of the school and value having their views listened to and acted upon. Outdoor play activities are interesting and the school grounds used well to encourage responsibility and imaginative play. Children know the importance of including others in things they do, such as playing games in the playgroup. Overall, children are very well behaved and keen to learn. A few children are provided with targetted additional support through individualised programmes. The headteacher should ensure children are sufficiently involved in discussions and decisions that affect their learning.
- Most children are developing a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They are enthusiastic about keeping healthy and have a good knowledge and understanding of the 'Eatwell Guide', food groups and the importance of being physically active. Almost all children participate daily in physical activities with their teachers. They are developing a growing understanding of mental, emotional and social wellbeing and articulate their feelings if they or their friends need help. The headteacher makes effective use of ongoing monitoring records. Almost all children say they feel safe and that the school is helping them to keep safe. The school should continue to implement clear progression pathways for skills in health and wellbeing. Ensure all children evaluate their progress through a deep understanding of wellbeing indicators. Most children have a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and the importance of being active, by the end of primary school. The oldest children talk articulately about their learning and understand what the wellbeing indicators mean to them. The Community Police Officer works with them to build effective relationships and continuity into secondary school. Learning about internet safety and substance misuse is supported well.
- The headteacher and staff are aware of their responsibilities in fulfilling the school's statutory duties. Staff work with a range of partners to help coordinate support as appropriate. They know which children face barriers to learning and monitor their progress. Attendance levels are

high and there are no exclusions. All children are included well to access learning opportunities. The school should develop an equalities policy to build on children's understanding of discrimination and diversity and promote equalities across the school.

- The school is meeting the main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act to promote school meals, protect the identity of those entitled to a free school meal and ensure access to free drinking water throughout the day.
- The nutritional analysis of the menu shows that planned provision meets all relevant standards. Further nutritional analysis of information based on actual selections made by children also shows that relevant standards are met.
- The headteacher has rightly prioritised compiling helpful information about each class and the needs of all children. She has already made a positive impact on improving systems to monitor and track children's progress and should continue to develop approaches to early intervention and the role of support for learning. In further developing a whole-school overview of children's needs, the headteacher and staff need to have clear systems for identifying and assessing needs. Teachers should have more regular dialogue with support staff about learning targets for the children they are supporting. This will help develop effective teamwork and collective responsibilities for ensuring all children are supported as effectively as possible.

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 English and numeracy and mathematics is good. The school administers standardised assessments to help inform the progress children are making. School information about Curriculum for Excellence levels indicates gradually increasing levels of attainment over recent years. Overall, most children are achieving expected levels. Senior leaders and staff now need to analyse data systematically and develop rigorous approaches to monitoring children's progress. They should use data analysis to focus professional dialogue with staff more effectively and develop a clear understanding of standards.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the standard of literacy and English attainment across the school is good. Most children are making expected progress. Children who require additional support are making appropriate progress. However, their learning targets should be more clearly defined and shared with staff as appropriate.

Listening and talking

- Overall, most children are making good progress in talking and a few are exceeding expected levels. Across the school, almost all children listen well to instructions from their teachers and most are confident and articulate. Most share their views confidently when working in small groups and pairs. At the early level, most children talk and play together and share activities responsibly. They listen carefully to teacher directions and are gaining confidence in class routines. At first level, most children communicate clearly with one another when working independently in small groups. They contribute their thoughts and ideas appropriately and are confident in making contributions to teacher led lessons. By second level, almost all children are articulate in sharing their opinions and build effectively on one another's ideas. They are confident in taking lead roles in small groups and responding to questions from teachers. They are becoming skilled in using persuasive language to influence one another in decision making. A few children are making very good progress in talking towards the end of second level.

Reading

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. At the early level, most children recognise initial sounds and simple common words. They are confident in using clues when following written instructions for learning activities. Children working at first level are enthusiastic about reading independently and develop their skills progressively using digital technologies. They read regularly for pleasure and select appropriate texts of interest to them on weekly visits to the library. They are becoming skilled in applying reading skills to research texts linked to topics of interest. By second level, almost all children read independently and from a variety of genre. They use their skills in clarification to ensure understanding of texts they have read. They select from a variety of fiction books to encourage personal reading and shared reading activities.

Writing

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in writing. At the early level, the majority of children are developing the confidence to write common words independently. They are developing good oral vocabulary as they progress towards writing independent stories. The pace in learning to write should be increased to ensure all children make the best possible progress. At first level, most children organise their writing appropriately when reflecting on their reading. Overall, children are not yet applying spelling to their continuous writing accurately enough. They are developing skills in using connectives and now need to use punctuation more consistently. At second level, most children are making good progress. They are becoming skilled in writing for a wide range of purposes and applying their skills across the curriculum. Overall, the standard of children's writing across the school should be of a higher quality. Too few children by the end of first level and start of second level write well-crafted pieces across a variety of genre and do not apply their skills in other curricular contexts regularly enough.

Attainment in numeracy and maths

- Across the school most children are making good progress in their learning in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school most children are achieving appropriate levels of attainment.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children name and arrange coins in order of value to £2. They talk about daily routines in class and sequence events that happen during their day. At first level, children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 confidently. They use addition and subtraction, making best use of mental strategies and written skills. They are less confident in using multiplication and division facts. Most children explain what a simple fraction is using a pictorial representation. They use the 12 hour analogue clock to tell the time past and to the hour. At second level, almost all children round to the nearest 100,000 including using decimals to 2 decimal places. They multiply and divide numbers to two decimal places by 10, 100 and 1000. They make effective use of strategies and show agility in mental maths problems. Their recall of multiplication tables is sound. They read and record time in both 12 hour and 24 hour notation and convert between the two confidently. They have a good understanding of the common units of measure and can calculate the perimeter of two-dimensional shapes and the area of two-dimensional irregular shapes. The standard of presentation in children's jotters is not of high enough quality across the school.

Shape, position and movement

- Children at early level are developing the language of shape, position and movement and recognise common two-dimensional shapes. At first level, most children have an understanding of more complex two-dimensional shapes and the properties of three-dimensional objects. At second level, most children have knowledge of the eight compass points and use these confidently to identify a range of angles.

Information handling

- Across the school, children require more opportunities to develop skills in information handling. At early level, children work with the teacher to organise findings about favourite colours by counting. At second level, children organise information in tables and use it to complete numeracy tasks. They need to develop skills to carry out investigations and surveys, devising and using a variety of methods to gather information and work with others to collate, organise and communicate the results in an appropriate way. Teachers need to ensure children regularly apply their skills to real contexts and continually build on prior learning across all aspects of numeracy and mathematics.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are developing skills in the four capacities from working together in whole school committees. Their involvement in school groups supports them to become confident and take responsibilities. The Rights Respecting Schools group is making an impact on the school community's understanding of rights and ensures collaborative working across stages in the school. An increasing number of leadership opportunities are provided for children. The recently formed 'Tweet Tribe' is learning about safety issues using Twitter and the ways to share school work. The school should continue to develop systematic and effective approaches for engaging with, and involving children in improving the school. Children's achievements are valued and celebrated in classes and at regular school assemblies. Children and staff record achievements in personal assessment folders. These are helping children and parents to share in children's successes and identify progress. The school recognises the need to develop a more systematic approach to gathering and evidencing individual achievements over time. There is headroom to track participation in clubs and wider achievements more rigorously. Children have achieved success in athletics, swimming galas, 'Mock Court' activities and participation in film awards.

Attainment over time

- The school has raised attainment in most aspects of literacy and numeracy over the past three years. Teachers use a range of assessments to inform judgements about what children have achieved. This information helps identify those who require additional support. Senior leaders should continue to focus on working collegiately with staff to further strengthen a common understanding of standards. They should continue to support staff to raise expectations for all children. Teachers are at an early stage of moderating children's work and are developing confidence in their professional judgements and use of assessment. The school has helpful data to make comparisons with other schools and cohorts within the school. The headteacher and staff should ensure assessment and moderation continues to be a focus for improvement to raise standards.

Equity for all learners

- The school has a wide range of data that defines a range of characteristics about the school and helpful comparisons with others in East Lothian. The school identifies children who are not on track and provides additional support. Pupil Equity Funding is used successfully to target support in maths recovery. The school should continue to monitor the progress of children who face additional challenges in their learning and ensure teaching approaches and resources are matched well to meet the needs of all children.
- The school continues to work closely with the active schools coordinator to increase participation in clubs across the school. Transport to clubs is an obstacle for many children and their families and is preventing some from attending. The school should pursue its plans to secure funding to minimise costs and boost participation numbers.

School Empowerment

■ Pupil voice

- The school has a new leadership team. An enhanced staffing level this session is enabling promoted staff to lead self-evaluation processes and increase opportunities to involve children widely in the work of the school. The aim of the leadership team is to empower children through participation in several newly formed groups led by children and facilitated by staff.
- The staff, parents and children have established the school's values and founded groups to enhance the values in the day-to-day life of the school. Children say they are listened to, their views are valued and that respectful behaviour is demonstrated through positive relationships.
- The recently established Tweet Tribe, House Captains and Learning Council are involving an increasing number of children in the life of the school. Children who expressed an interest in the various roles learned skills of presentation and are selected by peers and staff. The group discussions are showing promising progress in identifying next steps for each of their roles and responsibilities. Children are sharing their learning on how to compose a tweet and comply with protocols. House Captains are increasingly involved in school improvements and seek the views of others about learning activities. They raise the awareness of the importance of mental health across the school. Children show an increasing interest in leading environmental issues in the community and beyond.
- Senior staff are outward looking in their vision for continuous improvement. They bring new ideas and effective practice from a variety of schools and use their experience and professional learning to inform school improvement priorities. They take an appropriate focus on the four learning arenas and identify the school is well established within its community. The appropriate next steps for school improvement is to involve children in leading evaluative approaches to the quality of learning and teaching. This will provide staff with insight to ways in which teaching and learning can respond effectively to the needs of children.

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.