

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Joseph's RC Primary School and Nursery Class**

Falkirk Council

11 August 2020

## Key contextual information

St Joseph's RC Primary School and Nursery is a denominational primary school situated in the town of Bonnybridge near Falkirk. The current role is 143 pupils in the primary school. There are 32 children in the nursery class. The headteacher has been in post since April 2019.

### 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 interactions
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the school, there is a positive and nurturing ethos. The Gospel values of respect, care and kindness are evident through staff and children's interactions. Teachers' professional learning in restorative practices is helping children to become more resilient. Children are supported to understand their emotions and are reminded of expected behaviours which is helping them to self-regulate their behaviour.
- All staff know the children well. The headteacher and staff have created calm and purposeful learning environments. Most children are engaged, motivated and interact well during activities in their learning experiences. A few lessons are too teacher-directed. In these lessons, children's engagement fluctuates. Most children work well together in pairs, small groups and also when independent of the teacher. Children talk about their learning and take responsibility for selecting the appropriate resources to support them. Teachers use digital resources effectively to support children's learning in addition to reinforcing digital learning concepts through carefully selected apps. Teachers should increase children's use of digital approaches to support and extend their learning across all curricular areas.
- At P6 and P7, children have a range of roles and responsibilities that enables them to contribute positively to school life. Children from all stages are represented appropriately in the pupil council. Leadership groups consult all children regarding topics such as the playground, and use this information to make whole school improvements. The majority of children feel their views are listened to as a result. A minority believe that their views are not considered when making school improvements. Senior leaders should ensure that pupil leadership groups share more regularly their work on how children's views have shaped these decisions. Children need to know that their opinions are valued and acted upon.
- The quality of teaching is good. Almost all teachers share the purpose of learning and are clear in their explanations. In a few lessons, children identify and talk about how to be successful in learning. In most lessons, children discuss their learning through effective plenary sessions. The majority of children take more responsibility for their learning. Teachers should support children more to discuss how they can be successful learners.
- Children benefit from a good range of teaching approaches. All teachers plan differentiated activities for groups and individuals in teacher-directed experiences. In a few lessons, children are making appropriate progress as the range of activities match their abilities. Most children

engage with learning activities, however, for a minority these do not always provide the right level of challenge to ensure sufficient progress. Teachers need to be consistent in planning and delivering follow-up activities that better match the needs of all children.

- Most teachers question effectively to enable children to extend and deepen their thinking. As a result, children have a good understanding of the skills they develop through their learning experiences. They are not able to transfer learned skills to other contexts. Further work should now be undertaken for teachers to regularly make links to skills for learning, life and work. This should extend children's thinking further and enable them to make links to real life contexts.
- Support staff are deployed effectively to support the different needs of children across the school. They liaise with teachers to ensure children experience consistent strategies to enable them to access their learning. Senior leaders should review approaches to support for learning. They should consider the balance of in-class support and extraction to ensure children's learning is continuous and not unnecessarily disrupted.
- Teachers are at the early stages of developing a range of approaches to giving children feedback on their learning. Children benefit from guidance in writing to support them to improve. They are given time to review feedback, both verbal and written, through learning journals and orally through matrix barcodes, and improve pieces of work. As a result, children have clear guidelines on how to improve. Teachers need to extend this practice to all curricular areas to increase opportunities for children to take responsibility for improving their work. In most lessons, children are engaged in thinking about their learning and checking their understanding through using a range of formative assessment techniques. Staff analyse effectively a range of standardised and diagnostic assessments, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) to identify gaps in individual children's progress. Senior leaders and teachers use the information from assessment activities to monitor effectively children's acquisition of skills across literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers are at the early stages of developing high quality assessments to review children's understanding and application of skills in less familiar contexts. Children should have more experiences where they demonstrate breadth, challenge and application in a range of contexts.
- A newly introduced team approach to analysing evidence of learning has strengthened teacher professional judgements on Curriculum for Excellence levels achieved by children. Teachers need to continue to focus on assessment to ensure that it is embedded in planning, learning and teaching across the curriculum. As planned, teachers should widen the scope of their moderation activity by working with other schools. Teachers should continue to develop further their understanding of national standards, and improve their use of moderation.
- Teachers plan lessons well, at appropriate levels, based on the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence. The use of progression pathways, linked to National Benchmarks, guides teachers in planning for progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. Teachers evaluate progress in learning and identify next steps for individuals and groups well to ensure positive outcomes for children. Teachers are increasing their confidence in using a range of assessment data to do so. They share their evaluations with senior leaders and plan appropriate interventions at termly tracking meetings. These meetings identify effectively strategies for children who require more challenge in their learning as well as those who need support. As a result of these discussions, children's progress towards achieving a level is noted along with other important information that could impact on their progress. Discussions at tracking meetings should focus more on how children can demonstrate breadth, challenge and application in their learning. Senior leaders, together with teachers, need to ensure more robust professional judgements on children's progress based on the full range of curriculum organisers.

## 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

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. The school is raising attainment well for most children across the school. The majority of children at second level in literacy are attaining well, however, there is scope to improve attainment at this level.

### Literacy and English

- Overall children's attainment in literacy and English is good.

### Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking is very good. Across all levels, almost all children listen and respond appropriately to others. They are articulate and share opinions and ideas well during class discussions. Almost all children participate well in paired and group discussion and contribute relevant information. They communicate clearly, ask relevant questions and apply taught skills to presentations and debates. Across all levels, all children need to develop confidence in applying their skills in a wider range of situations, including real life experiences beyond the classroom.

### Reading

- Attainment in reading is good. At early level, most children blend increasingly complex diagraphs to decode new vocabulary. They recall simple common words, which is helping them to tackle taught texts with confidence. A few children require more practice in reading common words and blends beyond the set texts. At first level, most children read fluently and select a few strategies to tackle unfamiliar texts. At second level, most children read fluently with good expression. They apply a range of strategies such as skimming, scanning and predicting to understanding new texts. A few children across first and second levels are not yet able to discuss a wide range of authors and compare and contrast different texts.

### Writing

- Attainment in writing is satisfactory. At early level, the majority of children form lower case letters correctly and use spacing appropriately. They write independently using familiar words, which they commit to memory. Most children at first level and the majority at second level increasingly use a variety of punctuation correctly and write well-structured sentences. In addition, the majority of children vary their sentence starters to engage the reader. Across all levels, the majority of children are not able to write for a range of purposes and discuss the features of different genres. They are not able to write increasingly extended pieces across a range of contexts.

### Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy is satisfactory. Across the school, children need to apply their numeracy and mathematics skills more regularly across other curricular areas.

## **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, most children are developing confidence counting, creating sequences and ordering numbers up to 20. They read analogue times accurately, and identify the related digital time. At first level, most children accurately add and subtract three digit whole numbers. They round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 with confidence. They are less confident in telling the time in a range of ways. They need to develop their understanding of common fractions and their application. At second level, children are confident in describing how numbers are constructed, including numbers beyond one million and numbers to three decimal places. They explain clearly their understanding of the benefits and risks of using bank cards. They need to develop further an understanding of the link between fractions, decimals and percentages. Across the school, children's knowledge and skills in measurement needs to be developed more fully.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, most children describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects accurately using basic properties. At first level, most children identify correctly right angles in the environment. Children at second level use basic mathematical language to describe an increased range of angles. Across first and second level, children need to develop more fully their skills across the range of concepts in shape, position and movement.

## **Information handling**

- At early level, children have made a positive start in interpreting simple graphs and charts. As they move through first and second level, children, collect, display and interpret data by engaging in a few relevant contexts. Children at first and second level need more practice to consolidate their information handling skills and apply these across different curricular areas. They also need to develop further their skills in using digital technology to organise and display data.

## **Attainment over time**

- Across the school, children's attainment has fluctuated. Despite this, there has been an improving picture. Most children are making good progress across the school in literacy and numeracy. However, at second level, a majority of children are making good progress in literacy. The headteacher and staff are beginning use information from their tracking systems to monitor children's attainment over time. The headteacher and staff need to track children's attainment in other areas of the curriculum to assure themselves of children's progress in these aspects.

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

- Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated both at assembly and in displays around the school. Children's skills and teamwork, particularly in regard to skills for learning, life and work are recognised and celebrated through house points. As a result of this, children are confident, articulate and aware of the responsibilities of citizenship. Children's leadership, physical education and sporting skills and wellbeing are supported effectively through local sporting and cultural partnerships such as with Active Schools, Stenhousemuir Football Club and Greenhill Historical Society. Children learn and achieve a range of skills from participating in the Pope Francis Faith Award. Together with staff, the headteacher should develop further the tracking and monitoring of children's wider achievements to support equity of opportunity.

## **Equity for all learners**

- The headteacher and staff have systems in place which promote equity for all children. Children are supported effectively with the costs of the school day. The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is used well to provide additional staffing for universal and targeted support across the

school which is improving literacy and numeracy for all learners. The school gathers information on attendance to make interventions on behalf of children who need support to attend school more regularly. This leads to increased attendance for targeted children across the school.

## Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.