

Summarised inspection findings

Strathdevon Primary School and Nursery Class

Clackmannanshire Council

25 February 2020

Key contextual information

Strathdevon Primary School and Nursery Class is a non-denominational school which serves the village of Dollar and surrounding areas. The headteacher and depute headteacher have been in post since May 2017. Until this point, the school's senior leadership posts had been filled by a series of temporary post holders. The current school roll is 169 children across the eight primary classes and 42 children in the nursery class. The school is part of the Alva Academy Cluster. Some children also transition to Dollar Academy.

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

- The headteacher is successfully leading and managing change across the whole school community. She has refreshed the vision for the school and shared this effectively through collaboration with the staff team, children and parents. An extensive range of community organisations are helping to drive forward the vision. The ambitious and highly relevant vision and underpinning school motto is helping to raise the profile of the school within the community. The school's motto, 'taking pride in all we do', is visible throughout the school and demonstrated in day to day practice. The school's values of ambition, respect, friendship and resilience are becoming embedded within the ethos and culture of the school. The pupil council and Parent Council and children are increasingly involved in decision making processes. These include helping to shape curriculum pathways that reflect the specific context of the school. A next step for the school is to link the values more closely to children's rights.
- The headteacher provides very strong strategic leadership and direction which is impacting very well on almost all aspects of the work of the school. The pace of change since session 2016/17 has increased significantly and is well-judged by the headteacher. She is highly regarded by staff who feel empowered by her leadership. Staff talk enthusiastically about the opportunities they have to look outwards, to learn from others. Almost all are adjusting their practice effectively to take account of professional learning opportunities. Parents welcome the improvements being made in striving for a more inclusive and equitable school ethos. Partners strongly appreciate their involvement with the school and value the reciprocal relationship they have with senior leaders.
- The headteacher is ably supported by the depute headteacher and principal teacher. They have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which they carry out conscientiously and effectively. There is a consensus amongst staff that the opportunities they have to lead specific projects are extending their professional skills and competencies. The impact of these leadership roles is evidenced in the school's improved approaches to teaching reading.
- Children benefit from the many leadership opportunities on offer. They embrace various roles confidently, as members of the Eco Committee, as Digital Leaders and as House Captains. They lead assemblies confidently and contribute regularly to the school blog. Children's views

are sought regularly and acted upon in meaningful ways. They helped to shape the refurbishment of a classroom to provide an inviting space to enjoy a wide range of reading materials. Almost all children show appropriate levels of respect for each other in lessons and in the playground. Parents and community members are encouraged through a variety of communication platforms, which include social media and the school blog to contribute their views and share talents. They are welcomed into the school and make valuable contributions to children's learning. A dedicated community group of 'mature readers' help to instil in children a love of reading. A next step for the school is to involve parents in the development of the health and wellbeing curriculum pathway.

- The arrangements for gathering and analysing data are a strong feature of school improvement. The data is used by senior leaders and teachers as part of their approaches for raising attainment and tracking children's progress and achievements. The helpful data is both qualitative and quantitative. The headteacher is highly skilled at presenting and interrogating formative and summative data. She works closely with senior leaders and teachers to build up a clear plan for improvement. Improvement plan priorities are clear, concise and time bound. In addition, the use of 'task briefs' helps senior leaders and staff to track and monitor progress of specific school improvement priorities. The headteacher holds regular moderation meetings with teachers to reflect on, and track the pace of individual children's progress. These meetings place a strong focus on how outcomes for individual children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing will be realised. There is an expectation that teachers' curriculum plans, including spontaneous and intentional learning activities, in and out of school, will be of the highest quality. Plans for learning detail both targeted and universal support to ensure all children are appropriately supported and challenged.
- Senior leaders, staff, parents and partners use national guidance to help them determine how well they are doing and what needs to improve. The robust self-evaluation and staff participation in career-long professional development activities is leading to improved consistency in high quality teaching and very good attainment over time. Through the teacher learning community (TLC), teachers are empowered to take forward an identified set of improvement priorities. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together. They are a cohesive and motivated team. The current school improvement plan (SIP) accurately reflects the specific needs of the school. The use of research to support the school's self-evaluation adds credibility to the key areas outlined in the SIP for change and improvement. Areas for improvement are justified and supported by both qualitative and quantitative data gathering and analysis. A successful example of linking areas for improvement with the school's values is the well-developed relationships policy. The relationships policy rightly places a clear focus on improving equity and outcomes for all. Already, there are encouraging signs that the ethos within the school is more nurturing and responsive to individual needs. Senior leaders and staff are intent on making sure that any change is sustainable.

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

- The ethos of the school is welcoming, inclusive and nurturing. The recent focus on strengthening positive relationships is impacting positively on children's interactions with each other. Almost all children, are very well behaved, polite and respectful of each other. Almost all children, are attentive and settle promptly to the activities their teachers set for them. A few children across the school do not focus well enough on the tasks they are given. Children are becoming increasingly more aware and considerate of the differing needs of their peers and others in the school. Children receive well-judged support from the caring and enthusiastic learning assistants and support staff.
- The school accommodation, both inside and outside offers children a range of stimulating spaces to learn. Staff value children's achievements and celebrate their successes well. Highly attractive displays show examples of children's work and their cultural and sporting accomplishments in and beyond the school. Children like to talk about their successes which can be found in illustrations in floor books, in jotters, and classroom displays. Teachers provide children with access to a limited supply of digital technology.
- Almost all children engage fully during lessons. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above the authority average. There have been no exclusions for the past three years. Children are happy and very proud of their school. Almost all children say the work they do in class is enjoyable and most find it challenging. Children do not yet have a consistently clear understanding of themselves as learners. They talk about what they are learning during a lesson and now need support to link their developing knowledge to individual learning targets. Children receive helpful written and oral feedback from their teachers which they then act upon to improve their learning. Children use evaluative language skilfully when offering feedback to each other.
- Children at the early level have some opportunities to take part in active learning. Most can independently make choices during their play. A few younger children are still learning to take turns and share when playing together. The physical environment at the early level should be developed further to offer high quality play-based learning opportunities. Careful thought should be given to the quality and sufficiency of resources available to support children's learning at the early stages. The school has yet to evaluate how play supports, extends and deepens children's learning. The school needs to develop a clear policy on play with a shared rationale that reflects the context of the school.
- Teachers are very well prepared. A few examples of highly effective teaching were observed where the pace and level of challenge motivates and enthuses learners. Overall, the quality of teachers' questioning is good. Teachers regularly share the purpose of learning with children at the start of a lesson. Most teachers revisit these during lessons. Helpful plenary sessions offer children a chance to talk purposefully about their learning. In almost all lessons, teachers plan

activities which are linked to prior learning and meaningful real life contexts. They provide clear explanations. Teachers need to provide children with increased opportunities to be creative and to develop further their skills as independent learners. During lessons teachers often make reference to the school's refreshed vision and values. They ensure these are embedded within the life and work of the school. Teachers should continue to promote respectful interactions. This will help to minimise the negative impact on learning caused by a few children who occasionally interrupt lessons. Teaching and support staff work in close collaboration to plan, and provide, relevant interventions for children.

- In almost all lessons, teachers make appropriate use of a range of digital technology to enhance teaching. They encourage leadership and support from children in their role as digital leaders. Children should have more regular access to technologies within their classrooms to expand their range of vital digital skills. At present, children's access to tablets and laptop computers is too limited.
- The headteacher has introduced a highly effective tracking and monitoring system. Detailed electronic records are maintained for each child on the 'Pupil Tracker' and the 'Visual Pupil Tracker'. These records inform professional dialogue at regular meetings with teachers to improve learning and raise attainment.
- Teachers assess children's progress using their professional judgements. Frequent moderation activities are leading to teachers making increasingly accurate judgements about the progress children are making. The content of teachers' plans are improving as a result of building in a clear purpose for assessment as part of the learning cycle. Teachers acknowledge that they are at the early stages of engaging with National Benchmarks in some curricular areas. As teachers gain familiarity with National Benchmarks they are becoming more confident in assessing children's progress and planning for future learning.
- Teachers are gaining confidence in analysing the data they gather to identify children's next steps in learning. Across the school, teachers use data with increasing accuracy. The school's summative data and formative assessment tools inform planning of appropriate activities for learners. Teachers should continue to use national assessment guidance to ensure that valid and reliable assessment is integral to collaborative planning of learning and teaching. Teachers are raising their expectations of what children can do through the TLC and in implementing curriculum initiatives such as equitable literacy.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Curriculum pathways are implemented for most areas of the curriculum. Clackmannanshire Progression Pathways provide helpful guidance for staff and are in use for literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics and health and wellbeing. These are based on Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and National Benchmarks. School staff have developed pathways for technologies and religious and moral education. They should continue with plans to update these. There are several examples of staff and partners supporting children well to understand the world of work. Children in P5 to P7 have used the 'My World of Work' website to support them in identifying their skills for learning, life and work. The school should consider how to plan progression in skills as part of their curriculum refresh. A curriculum rationale should now be developed to include the recently developed vision, values and aims. This will ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all learners, plans for learning in the four contexts and reflects the unique context of the school.
- A few children are developing digital literacy using QR codes and recording short book trailers and book reviews. The confident P5-7 digital leaders helpfully pilot apps to be introduced in all classes.
- Children benefit from two hours of quality physical education on a weekly basis. This is delivered effectively by a visiting physical education teacher and supported by progressive pathways in this area of the curriculum. Music is delivered by a specialist teacher and planned collaboratively with class teachers.
- Children from P1-7 are learning French as part of the 1+2 approach to modern languages.
- Outdoor learning is at an early stage of development. There is a need to increase this and develop a consistent and progressive approach to outdoor learning across the school. Older children have several opportunities to experience a residential excursion.
- Transition arrangements from the nursery to P1 are well established. A programme of activity allows children and parents to become familiar with the routines of the school. Teachers and nursery staff should now plan the early level together to ensure children's learning is continuous as they make the move from nursery to school. Some children transition to Dollar Academy and to other secondary schools. These transitions are well-managed.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are very positive about their involvement with the school. They value the approachable and supportive headteacher and staff.
- Parents are supported to participate, contribute to, and understand their child's learning through termly curriculum newsletters and open days. There are a number of helpful events planned for parental engagement at all stages in the school. These include assemblies, classroom visits, social events such as the World War Two tea party and the recent P1-3 family event. Parents are invited to learn how they might make use of literacy and numeracy packs at home.
- The large number of partners, including parents, community members and local clubs and businesses enhance the learning provision for children in school. Children are developing skills at the 'Coding Club' and through STEM.

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

- Staff have a shared understanding of their responsibilities in relation to wellbeing and improving outcomes for children. They are continuing to develop the ambitious learning environment, underpinned by the school values. Nurturing approaches are a strong feature of lessons and other activities across the school. Children respond with enthusiasm to the focus on praise of good behaviour and effective learning. The school has recently introduced restorative approaches in all interactions. This is implemented effectively across the school and is understood well by most staff. A few children need further support to understand the impact their actions can have on others. The school should implement its draft relationships policy to address this need.
- Most children approach staff with questions or suggestions. They are proud of their contribution to the introduction and evaluation of the revised approaches to playground experiences. More children are supported to be active and engage in a wider range of activities. Almost all children say they feel safe in school and have someone to speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Most children are treated fairly and respectfully by staff.
- Children have a clear understanding of their own wellbeing and can reference the school values and give examples of them in relation to themselves. Each class creates its own charter and children discuss why they have chosen particular approaches in their class and how these are applied. They are less confident in articulating what the wellbeing indicators mean and their relevance to themselves. Children do not yet fully understand the relationship between wellbeing and achieving success. Staff need to develop further children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators and their relationship to children's rights and health and wellbeing. This will support children to make more coherent links between personal targets and their wellbeing. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
- Staff meet the needs of children who require additional support in a range of creative ways. The senior leadership team has regular formal and informal meetings with staff to discuss children's progress in overcoming barriers to learning. Staff are becoming increasingly skilled at providing more effective, targeted support to improve outcomes for children. They create targets and review progress in order to effectively meet the needs of identified children. This includes those who are care experienced. Senior leaders evaluate the success of planned interventions. Almost all children who are recorded as having additional support needs, are supported successfully to access their learning and make appropriate progress. A few children are exceeding expectations. 'Team around the child' meetings are held regularly and target early interventions. Individualised programmes and interventions support children's learning, wellbeing, confidence and success well.

- Children are confident they are listened to and challenge discrimination. Staff engage in a wide range of professional learning and have a good knowledge and understanding of equalities. They are currently revising the personal and social education curriculum with the intention of making more explicit links between children's understanding of their own wellbeing and rights, their understanding of diversity and their place as citizens.
- All staff are very aware of individual children, their families and the school's wider context in the local community. All children are included in school activities such as Bikeability. All children access wider achievement opportunities and participate in a variety of opportunities to achieve success. This supports parity of experience for all. The school has developed important partnerships with the local community and other partners which provide both universal and targeted support to meet the needs of learners.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment data provided by the school is extensive, robust and accurate. The most recent data provided by the school to the end of June 2019, shows almost all children are achieving expected levels of attainment in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy. Teachers' professional judgements are reliable. Their recent involvement in moderation activities with colleagues and senior leaders is improving their common understanding of achieving a level.
- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Almost all children who may be experiencing barriers to learning are benefitting from well-targeted support and are making appropriate progress.
- At first level, almost all children achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels for listening and talking and most for reading, writing and numeracy. At second level, almost all children achieve appropriate CfE levels for listening and talking, reading and writing and most children for numeracy. Staff use data from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments to contribute appropriately to the overall teacher professional judgement as part of a range of assessments. Staff should continue working to ensure that the shared and increasingly accurate moderation processes in reading and writing are extended to applying National Benchmarks in all areas. Staff have created a literacy rich environment throughout the school environment and children say that this has increased their interest in reading.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are making good or very progress in listening and talking. At early level, almost all children are making good progress in listening and talking. They talk about simple stories from their reading books and communicate and share stories during their play. Almost all children listen well to and follow instructions. At first level, most children contribute their ideas and opinions independently in group work and in pairs. They develop their own questions across a range of contexts. A few children at this level need to focus more on learning to listen to others and take turns to speak. Across second level, most children are making very good progress in listening and talking. They listen actively and respectfully and collaborate well. They explain their thinking and feedback confidently and with a wide range of vocabulary. They are articulate and enjoy opportunities to share their learning. During group discussions, children make appropriate contributions to build well on the ideas of others.

Reading

- Overall attainment in reading is very good. The school has invested in extending access to reading for the past two years. Staff have worked effectively to foster a love for reading in children. Assessments show improvements in reading age and staff predict further improvements in CfE attainment in reading this year. Assessment approaches in reading comprehension is tightly focused on reading skills.

- At the early level, almost all children recognise a few initial sounds. Most children identify a number of common words with confidence. Almost all children who have recently achieved first level explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. They accurately identify key features of fiction texts, including blurb, cover, title and author. Most children at second level read with fluency and expression, using appropriate pace and tone. They discuss character and plot well within the books they are reading. They demonstrate a high level of understanding of how to read and scan complex reading texts to identify particular information. They create and answer understanding, inferential and evaluative questions related to a text and discuss how the writer uses creative language to describe a character.

Writing

- Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in writing. The recent focus on reading is contributing to an increased focus on high quality writing. Children at early level are having a go at writing down their thoughts and feelings in words and pictorially. Children at first level are using capital letters and full stops in both imaginative and functional writing. Almost all children at second level, write independently and punctuate sentences correctly using descriptive language and connectives. Most children at second level, write extended pieces of writing, using paragraphs and a variety of sentence structures to engage the reader. They use sentences of different types and lengths and vary sentence openers. Overall, children's writing across the curriculum is of a consistently high standard. Almost all children make effective use of self, peer and teacher assessment to improve the standard of their work. High quality writing is shared effectively on displays throughout the school.

Other curriculum areas

- Staff include STEM and 1+2 languages activities within planned learning, but are unable to provide evidence of how well children are achieving. Staff now need to develop further arrangements to track and monitor children's progress across all aspects of the curriculum.

Mathematics and numeracy

- Across the school, children's attainment in numeracy is very good. The school's data shows that they are beginning to close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children. Data is also collected and analysed by gender. The gender gap narrowed in 2019 at both first and second level, but has grown slightly at early level. Boys are currently outperforming girls in numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children in P1 and P4 are on track to achieve expected levels in numeracy and mathematics by the end of June 2020. The majority of P7 children are on track to achieve second level in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children identify the number before and after and find missing numbers in a sequence to 20. They use practical methods to add and subtract within 10. They complete practical activities to find half of a number by sharing equally into two groups. Children calculate the correct change from 10p.
- At first level, almost all children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They demonstrate an understanding of place value with five digit numbers and solve addition and subtraction problems with three digit numbers. Children record money in pounds and pence using correct notation. They use instruments of measure such as rulers, meter sticks and trundle wheels and record their measurements using correct notation. At first level, children sort simple fractions in order of size and change improper fractions to mixed numbers.
- At second level, most children calculate costs and determine affordability within a given budget. They use their knowledge of profit and loss practically when running a healthy tuck shop and bring and buy sale. Children create equivalent fractions and then simplify them. Most

children accurately calculate the area of squares and rectangles. They are beginning to apply this knowledge to calculate the area of compound shapes. The majority of children measure capacity and convert units of measure from millilitres to litres. Children multiply and divide decimals to two decimal places confidently.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children sort and identify two dimensional shapes confidently and to create patterns. Children use the positional language of, front, back, above, below, backwards and forwards correctly.
- At first level, most children working with three dimensional objects match them to their nets and identify the number of faces, edges and vertices on each of them. They use their knowledge of grid references to plot on a map. Children correctly label compass points and record directions when making a full and quarter turn clockwise and anticlockwise. They use technology such as programmable toys to follow directions.
- At second level, most children calculate missing angles using their knowledge of supplementary and complementary angles. They correctly label different types of triangles. Most children correctly identify and illustrate line symmetry on a range of two dimensional shapes.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children use tally marks and pictographs to record information and to interpret bar graphs to find information. At first level, most children interpret information tables to answer questions. They describe when it might be appropriate to use tally marks or bar charts to display information. Most children at second level use digital technology to create bar graphs with an appropriate title and labelling. They describe how they display information in a pie chart, bar chart or Venn diagram and give examples of when these are used.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders closely monitor attainment. The school uses its standardised assessment well to identify areas for improvement, such as in numeracy at second level, and is addressing these successfully through time-limited, targeted interventions. The school prioritises early interventions leading to improvements in outcomes for all children.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all children are confident, successful and gaining important skills and capacities which will be beneficial to their future lives. They make effective contributions to the work of the school and community. They take pride in performing at local events, taking part in competitions and honing their entrepreneurial skills through fund-raising activities. The house system creates opportunities for children to come together in teams where they are encouraged to share their views and opinions.
- A wealth of clubs, committees, sporting and cultural activities are available to all children. Many of these opportunities are supported by parents, staff and community members and partners.
- The school tracks children's achievements. Records are monitored by senior leaders to ensure children's successes are celebrated and recognised at class and whole school events. The headteacher is proactive in seeking out sporting and cultural opportunities for children who may benefit socially, emotionally and cognitively from taking part in activities during the school day and after school. Funding is also sourced by the school to support the delivery of some of the clubs and children's participation. Participation rates are high and most after school activities are free.

- School based and Active Schools tracking evidences high participation levels in sports and extra-curricular clubs, with evidence of children with barriers to participation being supported to achieve. Commendably, the school has achieved their second Gold School Sport Award, which enables children to take leadership roles in sports and has increased participation over time. Partners speak positively of their engagement with senior leaders and how planning collaboratively supports inclusion.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff, have a strong focus on ensuring equity for all children. They are aware of particular challenges facing a number of children and families and take positive, carefully targeted action. The school has a hardship fund, Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and community and parental funding. This funding is directed where it has maximum impact. As a result, a few children at risk of missing out, access sporting and other opportunities which are developing their confidence and increasing their motivation. Senior leaders have carefully considered how best to address the attainment and achievement gaps they have identified, with a range of planned interventions, both universal and targeted. The headteacher has evidence of the reading gains made by all children eligible for PEF and receives support through the Equitable Literacy Programme. The nurture base provides vulnerable children with additional support and is improving their wellbeing and social skills.

School Empowerment

■ Empowering parents through involvement

- Increasing parental involvement in the decision making processes has been one of the key drivers for the headteacher since taking up her post in May 2017. An audit of engagement identified that parental contributions to the work of the school were too narrow and mainly focussed on raising funds and offering time as helpers at events. Communication was too formal and one-way. Parents are now equal partners in the decision making processes. They help shape curriculum pathways, and make valued contributions to the delivery of the curriculum as experts in a particular field. The creation of the school blog, and Parent Council newsletters is empowering parents to be involved in their child's education.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The headteacher has introduced a highly effective tracking and monitoring system. Detailed records are maintained for each child on the online 'Pupil Tracker' and the 'Visual Pupil Tracker'. These records form the basis of regular meetings with teachers with the specific aim of improving learning and raising attainment.

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.