

Summarised inspection findings

East Plean Primary School and Nursery Class

Stirling Council

3 March 2020

Key contextual information

East Plean Primary School is set in a rural mining village on the outskirts of Stirling. The new school building was opened in 2012 and stands on the site of the original village school. The catchment incorporates the village of Plean and surrounding area. The school roll is 152 across eight classes with 30 learners in nursery. 50.3% of learners in Primary 1-7 live in Deciles 1 and 2. The school has a Rainbow Room where staff provide therapeutic and learning support to children within a range of additional support needs.

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 senior leaders and staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to achieving the best possible outcomes for children and families. They do this through nurturing approaches, strong links with partners and shared values. The headteacher is highly regarded by children, staff, parents and partners. She has a very clear understanding of strategic planning for continuous improvement and has developed very positive relationships and partnerships across the wider school community. Nurturing approaches are fully embedded in all aspects of school life. As a result, the school has a very positive ethos and staff and parents have high expectations of learners' attainment, effort, attendance and punctuality.
- Staff across the school are highly committed to achieving success for all children. They understand clearly the unique context of the school. All staff know the children and families very well and understand learners' individual needs. The school places high importance on supporting the emotional and social needs of children and has created a warm and welcoming environment where all are valued.
- The headteacher and extended leadership team have developed rigorous approaches to planning for continuous improvement ensuring that time is protected for professional dialogue. A well-established self-evaluation calendar is renewed annually to reflect areas for improvement identified by staff, children and parents. All staff participate in a range of ongoing reflection and self-evaluation activities. Teachers engage in collaborative activities to improve learners' experiences and achievements. Staff lead learning walks and pupil dialogue sessions to discuss children's progress. They also share learning visits to each other's classes. This is embedding a shared commitment to improvement. Staff intervene early to support learners who are not achieving expected progress. They provide targeted support for children who need it. This is helping to secure improvements in children's literacy, numeracy and social skills.
- The school has developed very effective partnerships with community groups to support children and families. Increasing opportunities to attend a range of family learning events is developing parents' understanding of ways to help support their children's learning at home. This has led to increased confidence, improved aspirations and, in some cases, employment opportunities for parents.

- Staff at all levels confidently take on leadership roles in a range of school and curriculum developments. These include reading, mathematics, standards of writing and skills for work. Staff look at good practice outwith the school and access a variety of professional learning opportunities. These include peer visits and regular learning community meetings. The headteacher ensures that teachers' professional development and training reflects fully the school improvement priorities. Staff could further motivate children to learn and succeed through developing more innovative and creative approaches to learning across the curriculum.
- The school has used its Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) effectively to develop resilience and confidence in vulnerable learners and to provide direct support for families. Staff, parents and children particularly acknowledged the work of the health and wellbeing officer in engaging families in supporting their children's learning. This is having a positive impact on providing the right support at the right time, improving children's confidence and attendance and reducing late coming and exclusions.
- The school has established a wide variety of effective forums for children to share responsibility for school improvement and develop leadership skills. These include pupil improvement groups, house captains, curriculum ambassadors, peer mediators, nurture coaches and class helpers. Children feel listened to and senior leaders respond positively to their views and contributions. They are developing resilience and the confidence to make decisions about their own learning and support others to learn. Class charters ensure that children are fully involved in developing a child-friendly interpretation of expectations. To provide children with meaningful opportunities to lead change and improvement, senior leaders have plans to continue to develop and embed pupil leadership throughout the school and nursery.

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 nurturing and supportive ethos throughout the school reflects a commitment to children's rights and positive relationships. A determined focus on improving wellbeing for children and families is a key driver for success within East Plean Primary School. Children feel that they are valued and listened to as individuals and this enables them to engage positively in their learning. Relationships between staff and children and among children are caring and positive and almost all children behave very well.
- Most children are attentive during learning experiences. They participate in set tasks and activities well. They have regular opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and to the decision-making processes. Learners and staff report that the 'Aspire and Achieve Charter' ensures that expectations are consistent, clear and maintained across the school. In East Plean, the values of compassion, trust, respect and determination are evident in the interactions between staff and pupils. This is supporting learner participation and engagement. Across the school, all staff engage in supportive dialogue with children during learning experiences and at welcome times and transitions throughout the school day. Senior pupils participate well in positions of responsibility across the school. As curriculum ambassadors, they support numeracy, writing and digital learning with younger children and have opportunities to develop leadership including communication skills. Across the school, children are able to share their views. Children at the upper stages of the school articulate confidently their understanding of school improvements and their role within the variety of pupil groups.
- Across the school, most teachers share the purpose of learning ensuring that children have clarity within learning experiences. All teachers should involve children more consistently in dialogue about being successful within learning. The recently developed skills framework has enabled a greater focus on skills for learning, life and work. Staff should continue to build on this to enable children to talk more confidently about acquiring skills for learning across the curriculum and beyond the school day.
- Teachers structure learning experiences to ensure learner participation. Most children are well motivated and enjoy their learning. Senior leaders should support staff to ensure children have more creative and active opportunities to apply these skills across other areas of the curriculum. Across the school, teachers use a variety of teaching approaches which enable learners to work together. These include group, paired, individual and whole class learning experiences. In a few classes, children make appropriate use of digital technology to enrich learning. Staff, including senior leaders have identified the need to ensure consistency in using digital technologies across the school.
- In the most effective lessons, approaches to questioning supports children's thinking and builds on prior learning. In a few lessons, quality interactions and skilled questioning prompts deeper thinking and learning. The school should now develop further higher order questioning to

extend learning across all classes. In a few highly effective lessons, there is appropriate pace and challenge leading to effective learning. Attractive displays across the school provide evidence of children's work and teaching and learning prompts to further support their learning. Teachers provide helpful oral and written feedback and make effective use of praise and encouragement. This helps children understand their individual progress in learning.

- Staff across the school use a range of assessments to measure children's progress. Learner involvement in assessment is planned ensuring teachers make use of self and peer assessment to support progress. While most teachers use assessment evidence well to plan learning, a few children would benefit from more challenging tasks.
- Teachers are becoming more confident in making judgements about children's progress. They participate in ongoing moderation activities in school, with partner schools and within the local authority. As a result of this work, teachers are developing shared expectations of standards to be achieved in literacy and numeracy. Staff engagement in peer observations, learning walks and professional dialogue has identified the need for a shared whole school approach to teaching numeracy.
- Staff, including senior leaders gather a helpful range of data on children's learning and progress. They should review the cycle of planned monitoring and tracking to support the planning of more timely interventions to help children to make appropriate progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school has recently refreshed the curriculum rationale through a whole school community focus on its vision and values. Health and wellbeing is at the heart of the curriculum. The school has improved curriculum design, providing varied contexts to ensure a strong focus on wellbeing. The school has flexible learning pathways, supported by key staff and partners. This is meeting the needs of children and their families well and ensuring that the curriculum is more accessible for learners.
- Clear progression pathways in core curriculum areas are helping children to understand what they need to do to make progress in learning. This is helping to improve their attainment in literacy and numeracy. Collaborative working on numeracy with partner schools is improving teachers' confidence in assessing accurately Curriculum for Excellence levels. Children now have well planned opportunities to learn at least two modern languages at the school. In addition to French, children working within the second level can choose from Scots Language and Spanish, with learners at P7 learning Mandarin.
- Teachers share information about children's prior learning. This is supporting children well at key transition stages including moving to secondary school. Children with additional support needs receive very well-planned, enhanced support which is helping them to make a successful transition to secondary school.
- Staff confidently plan learning across all curriculum areas. They have rightly identified the need for a greater focus on learning for sustainability within the curriculum. Building on positive developments within interdisciplinary planning, children are beginning to improve their understanding their local context.
- The new skills framework is raising children's awareness of the wider world of work. Staff plan together to identify key skills for learning, life and work throughout the year. There is now a clear progression in children's employability skills as they move through the school. These skills are increasing children's future aspirations. The school is well placed to extend these skills beyond the classroom into outdoor learning within the local environment.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are very supportive of the school and enjoy regular informal visits and curricular events. Staff are committed to working with parents and a number of partners to support children and families. This has developed a climate of trust between parents and staff where all parties work closely together to support children's progress. The health and wellbeing officer is highly regarded by staff and parents. She provides valuable support to children and their families. Family learning is valued with events well planned across the school year. Almost all parental feedback regarding the opportunities provided in school to more effectively support children's learning at home is increasingly positive.
- Staff use a range of approaches to ensure parents and partners are kept informed about the work of the school. Senior leaders recognise the importance of involving parents and carers early in identifying and planning school improvements. They work hard to gather parent views through a variety of ways such as workshops, curriculum events and questionnaires.
- The Parent Council is proactive in arranging school events and communicating with the wider school community. Almost all parents are appreciative of the information they receive. Children benefit from the support of the Parent Council. Resources to facilitate school performances and investment in digital technologies have enhanced children's learning experiences.
- Almost all parents appreciate the opportunities to engage with class teachers about their child's school experience. A few parents reported they would appreciate more regular and timely information about their child's progress.

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

- The school's approach to developing staff, children's and families' understanding of wellbeing is commendable. All staff understand nurturing principles and the impact of these approaches on children's learning. Senior leaders and staff have developed respectful and trusting relationships with all children and families. Parents feel listened to, respected and actively involved in decisions made about school and learning. This is helping to improve outcomes for almost all children. Children are making progress in their learning, attendance is improving and the number of children who are excluded from school has reduced.
- The wellbeing indicators are a prominent visual feature in all areas of the school. Teachers use them to support children to reflect on their own and others' wellbeing. Children talk knowledgeably about what each wellbeing indicator is, its importance and what actions they can take to ensure their own wellbeing. Children understand what it means to be nurtured and how to nurture others. Trained pupil nurture coaches ensure that younger children and those who are vulnerable have the language to share their feelings. They ensure everyone has a friend to play with at break time. Further work is required to ensure all children benefit fully from the nutritionally planned meals provided.
- Inclusion is a highly visible feature of the school's work. All children, including those who need additional support are included well in all aspects of the school's work. Initiatives designed to build children's confidence, resilience and aspirations have led to children across the school using resilience tools. This helps them to manage their feelings and anxieties. As a result, children say they are able to focus on learning tasks and manage challenging situations, tasks and activities.
- Senior leaders ensure that the school's policies and practices are well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. They have developed a strategic approach to staged intervention to ensure children receive the most appropriate support according to their needs. This includes robust monitoring and tracking of the effectiveness of interventions. Senior leaders ensure that staged intervention plans are targeted, achievable and reviewed regularly with children and their parents and carers.
- Well supported by partners, staff have a very clear understanding of the needs of children who need significant support. Highly skilled support for learning assistants provide valuable support to ensure individuals and groups of children who need additional support can access their learning. Children who have been identified as requiring additional support in developing their social or emotional skills attend a variety of personalised programmes. These include therapeutic sessions, speech and language therapy and nurture groups in the school's Rainbow Room. This support is vital to the successful inclusion of more vulnerable children in the school.

- The school's open door policy reflects its highly inclusive and aspirational ethos. Senior leaders and staff recognise the important role that families play in children's attendance and progress in learning. They offer a variety of accessible and personalised approaches to communication with parents including school apps, bespoke newsletters for parents who need them, social media, open door and drop-in sessions. This is leading to improvements in parents' support and involvement in school events.
- The school has directed its PEF monies to ensure equity for all children. The highly effective health and wellbeing officer plays a vital role in providing effective, personalised support and access to a range of supportive community partners for families. Along with key community partners, she is successfully promoting health and wellbeing and building positive relationships with families. Evidence shows that her support is leading to more trusting relationships with parents who were previously hard to reach. More parents now attend staged intervention reviews and support their children well to learn and progress at home.
- The school aims to ensure that no one feels discriminated against because of their age, gender, ethnicity, religious belief or disability. Across the school, children, learn about aspects of discrimination through the school's health and wellbeing programme. Respect Ambassadors demonstrate respectful behaviours for other children by using, for example, kind words, looking at the person who is talking and saying please and thank you. There is scope to develop further whole school approaches to promoting children's and families' understanding of diversity.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The overall quality of children's attainment is good. Across the school, most children make good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Literacy

Literacy and English

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy is good. Most children are making good progress. A few children could make better progress if more appropriately challenged. The school should continue to develop teachers' confidence in assessing children's progress through moderation activities and explore ways to raise attainment for all children.

Listening and talking

- Most children are making very good progress in listening and talking. Almost all children listen well to adults, are respectful when others are speaking and follow verbal instructions correctly. At early level, most children enjoy talking about their learning. They play cooperatively, making choices and negotiating positively with one another. At first level, most children listen well and are increasing their understanding of the behaviours associated with good listening. At second level, most children confidently work within groups to make decisions about their learning. Staff have developed a robust programme to support children's wider communication skills, such as the use of Makaton in P1- P3 and pictures and symbols throughout the school. This rigorous approach is improving children's skills as they move through the school, significantly improving outcomes for children.

Reading

- Most children are making good progress in reading. The school has worked hard to create a culture of reading across the school. Children speak positively about their reading experiences and particularly enjoy the regular opportunities to be read to by the teacher. At early level, children engage well with a range of texts and confidently talk about stories. At first level, children can talk about their reading preferences and the features of different genres. At second level, most children read aloud fluently and with expression. They talk about the types of books they enjoy and the range of strategies they employ when reading an unfamiliar text. A few children would benefit from more challenging tasks and activities in reading.

Writing

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in their writing. At the early level, the environment is well structured and resourced to provide writing experiences across the curriculum. The majority of children are writing independently during their play and improving their formation and letter knowledge. At first level, the majority of children write independently using correct punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. They are beginning to include

interesting vocabulary in their writing and write for a variety of purposes. At second level, the majority of children can discuss the features of different genres and apply this knowledge across the curriculum. The school has embedded a consistent approach to the teaching of writing and children have a clear structure for how to improve.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good with most children making good progress. Children who have barriers to learning are identified and supported well in their learning. A few children would benefit from increased challenge in numeracy activities including problem solving.

Number, money and measure

- At the early level, most children can order and count to 20 and beyond. They are developing confidence in adding and subtracting using concrete materials. At first level, most children can round whole numbers to the nearest ten and hundred. They identify correctly the value of each digit in three-digit numbers. They can add amounts within ten pounds and are developing accuracy when calculating change. At second level children confidently estimate and round numbers accurately. Children demonstrate accuracy in talking about place value to one million. They can confidently convert fractions to decimals and percentages explaining the process. Almost all children at second level demonstrate financial awareness. They can talk about credit and debit cards, profit, loss and banking and making connections with the world of work.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, all children are developing their understanding of 2D shapes and a few are able to identify some of the properties of 3D shapes, including recognising these outdoors. Most children at the first level can draw 3D shapes, naming the properties of most familiar 3D shapes. At second level, most children can confidently name and draw a range of angles, including right, acute and obtuse angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children can sort and match objects. They are able to create simple charts such as programmes illustrating information that they have gathered. Most children at first level can answer questions about information illustrated on bar charts and tables. Most children at second level can collect, organise and display data accurately in a variety of ways including line graphs and pie charts.

Ideas of chance and uncertainty

- At first level, most children can predict how likely or unlikely an everyday event might occur such as the weather. At second level, children can talk about the likelihood of specific events occurring. For example, in science they make predictions about the likelihood of rust formation on metals, using a scientific method to test their theory.

Attainment over time

- Children's attainment has steadily increased in literacy and numeracy over the last three years. Staff use standardised assessment data for P1, P4 and P7 and well-planned class assessments when deciding achievement of a level. Regular meetings between teachers and senior leaders focus on tracking attainment in each class. Senior leaders have developed a tracking tool to monitor a range of data that impacts on children's progress over time. This data is helping senior leaders to analyse the effectiveness of interventions more strategically to inform future improvement work.
- Staff make good use of the National Benchmarks and have engaged extensively in moderation activities related to writing. Moderation of children's work to make judgements about the

achievement of a level should now extend to all aspects of literacy and numeracy. As planned, senior leaders should now track particular groups of children to identify trends across the school. These areas will support staff to continue to improve outcomes for children across all aspects of literacy and numeracy.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements in and outwith school are celebrated and recognised by staff. The school is at the early stages of tracking this information. Senior leaders should use this data, alongside the range of attainment data already gathered to rigorously track individual children's achievements and ensure no child is at risk of missing out.
- Children in senior classes have a wide range of leadership opportunities in school including the pupil improvement group, house captains, peer mediators, nurture coaches, sport leaders, playground monitors and reading buddies. This is helping them to develop leadership and organisational skills. Children's participation is valued and celebrated within the school. House action plans are developed with the children in line with the school improvement plan. This facilitates relevant opportunities for children in P1-P7 to make decisions about key school priorities. Children can talk about skills they are developing as a result of these opportunities and make connections with the world of work. The school is well placed to support children to achieve accreditation within the work already ongoing within the school.
- School staff are committed to providing a variety of extra-curricular activities for children during and after the school day. This is supporting children to develop a range of sporting and social skills. School staff link well with the local Active Schools Co-ordinator to deliver extra-curricular opportunities for most children.

Equity for all learners

- Staff ensure that all children are included and supported in the life of the school. Data gathered identifies groups of children requiring additional support, taking into account barriers to learning. As a result, all staff have a clear understanding of children's socio-economic backgrounds and plan effectively to improve outcomes for children. The school is making a very positive impact on removing barriers to learning and ensuring equity for all.
- The school is improving its approaches to addressing gaps in children's attainment. Senior leaders have put in place a range of interventions to raise attainment and improve children's emotional wellbeing and track children's progress termly. As planned, senior leaders should identify appropriate interventions for different cohorts of children and analyse the impact of support on their progress.

Choice of QI: 2.4 Personalised support

- Universal support
- Targeted support
- Removal of barriers to learning

- The school has developed a highly effective approach to inclusion. Senior leaders plan professional development strategically to build capacity amongst staff resulting in a calm, inclusive and nurturing environment for learning. Senior leaders draw on the expertise of the educational psychologist to deliver regular training to the school's nurture ambassadors and peer mediators. This ensures that children receive the right kind of help when they need it.
- Almost all children are benefiting from high-quality universal support. The school's inclusive ethos and proactive approach to partnership working is supporting positive relationships between staff, children and their families. The health and wellbeing officer offers daily 'emotional check-ins' for children and drop-in sessions to support families. This ensures that any anxieties children are experiencing are addressed promptly and they are ready to learn. Class teachers have embedded nurturing practices within the classroom to help children to manage changes during the school day. These include working with different staff and groups throughout the school day.
- The school has recently introduced twelve steps to resilience to help children manage their own feelings and responses. Children talk positively about the use of symbols, actions and the opportunities to discuss these at assemblies. This approach is supporting children to self-regulate and draw upon a range of strategies when in challenging situations.
- The headteacher and all staff are committed to continually improving their approach to early intervention. Senior leaders have developed a staged intervention calendar to help them identify support requirements promptly. Children are at the centre of planning. Staff involve children in discussing their targets and how they will achieve them. They consider carefully the most appropriate support at the point of planning. The depute head and support for learning teacher provide valuable advice to class teachers to plan appropriate strategies and well-timed interventions. In lessons, teachers should plan to ensure that pace and challenge in learning activities is appropriate for individual children.
- For children requiring specific support, staff plan tasks, activities and resources effectively to ensure appropriate pace and challenge. Staff and partners work together to support children and families through effective use of professional learning, support and specialist resources. Staff have developed strong relationships with a number of health partners. This is effectively removing barriers to accessing key services for families.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's 'Getting it right for every child and family' approach is improving the life chances of families, raising their aspirations and helping children to make progress. They do this by providing direct support for parents at home and through a range of well attended health and wellbeing and learning events. The school's health and wellbeing officer also works closely with a range of community and NHS partners to provide highly effective direct support for families. These approaches are enabling parents to more effectively support their children's learning and wellbeing.

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.