

Summarised inspection findings

Greyfriars RC Primary School

Fife Council

24 January 2023

Key contextual information

Greyfriars RC Primary School serves a wide catchment area stretching east of St. Andrews along the East Neuk of Fife and west to the Tay Bridge. The school has 189 children, organised into seven classes, three of which are composite classes. The school roll is subject to ongoing changes each session as a result of families moving into and out of the area. Almost all children live in areas designated as Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 5-10. A few children live in SIMD decile 4.

The headteacher has been in post since August 2022. She is supported by a principal teacher who teaches three days each week. The headteacher and the principal teacher have each been members of staff at Greyfriars RC Primary School for over 20 years.

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

- The school has a nurturing and supportive ethos underpinned by the Gospel values. This leads to a calm, settled environment, where almost all children feel safe. Led by the headteacher, staff have a significant focus on the care and welfare of all children. All staff know children and their families very well, as a result. Children throughout the school are friendly, articulate and well-mannered. They are considerate of one another and of visitors to the school.
- Children have opportunities to contribute to the life of the school through their participation on the pupil council, eco group and rights respecting group. Each of these responsibilities helps the children involved to develop their communication skills. Most children feel that adults listen to their views. The majority feel that their views are taken into account. The headteacher has introduced meetings with children to gather their views about their school to support improvement. It is too early to note any impact. This approach has the potential to increase children's involvement in the life of the school in meaningful ways.
- All children are well-behaved and engage willingly with learning activities teachers provide for them. They work well independently on teacher-directed tasks. Teachers should increase opportunities for children to take greater responsibility for leading their learning. A minority of teachers are providing children with valuable opportunities to be responsible and develop their independence. Across the school, teachers need to offer children more engaging, well-paced learning experiences across the curriculum which are carefully matched to their interests and needs. Children also need greater opportunities to apply their skills and knowledge in a range of different learning situations. Teachers should consider how they can develop more consistent, high-quality learning activities for children. These activities should take account of prior learning and meet better the needs of all children. Children at each stage across the school need more challenge in their learning.

- In almost all lessons teachers give clear instructions and explanations. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding. A few teachers use skilled questioning to develop children's higher order thinking skills. For example, within science children predict outcomes, justify responses and evaluate the effectiveness of experiments.
- Teachers share the purpose of learning consistently. Most children are able to talk about what they are learning during most lessons. Most teachers highlight steps children need to take to be successful in their learning in literacy and numeracy. They should now work with children to identify these steps together. In a few lessons teachers encourage children to review their learning against success criteria throughout the lesson. Most teachers support children to self and peer assess their work during writing lessons. This is helping children understand how to improve their writing. A few teachers encourage children to assess their own and others' numeracy work. A few teachers provide children with effective feedback on their writing. This supports children to recognise their next steps and what they need to do to improve. The headteacher should continue with plans to extend these practices consistently throughout the school, and across the curriculum.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing their digital skills to support children's learning. Teachers' use of digital technologies is not yet sufficiently embedded in learning and teaching across the school. Children and teachers need much greater access to a wide range of digital technology to enrich learning across the curriculum.
- Children at the early years are not yet benefiting from high quality play-based learning. Senior leaders and staff now need to work together to plan appropriate spaces, resources and learning through play. They should seek opportunities to work with early years colleagues in other establishments to support the introduction of children learning through play. Senior leaders and staff should engage with national guidance and professional learning to develop their understanding of the close relationship between play and learning.
- Teachers are developing processes to assess children's progress and attainment within and across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They have developed an annual calendar of summative and standardised assessments for P1 to P7. Most teachers are beginning to use this assessment information effectively to identify children's next steps. A few teachers plan opportunities for children to apply their skills in unfamiliar contexts. Senior leaders and staff should work together to develop this approach more consistently throughout the school. This will help teachers gather robust evidence to enrich the quality of assessment information they use to make judgements about children's progress. Teachers should build in assessment routinely when planning learning and teaching.
- All teachers engage well in writing moderation activities with school and cluster colleagues. This supports effectively their judgements about children's progress in writing. A few teachers moderate with one another at the planning stage. Senior leaders and teachers should ensure that approaches to moderation are more consistent and extended across the curriculum.
- All teachers use progression pathways to plan children's learning over the medium and short term. They are not yet using the same progression pathways consistently across the school. This results in gaps in children's learning across the curriculum. The headteacher introduced recently meetings with each teacher to evaluate the effectiveness of their planning in meeting the needs of all children. These meetings are not yet resulting in a consistent, effective approach to planning children's learning across the curriculum. The headteacher needs to monitor planning with teachers more rigorously. This is to ensure that children receive their entitlement to learning across the curriculum, and that teachers build on children's prior learning.

- Senior leaders and staff need to develop a clearer understanding of how to use data to inform learning, teaching and assessment. They also need to use data effectively to track the progress of particular groups of children. This would help them to identify gaps in learning and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. It would also support teachers to plan appropriate next steps in learning and raise attainment. The learning of children who require support is tracked more effectively.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Most children at all stages across the school achieve appropriate CfE levels. Overall, attainment remains stable as children move through the school. At all stages, a significant minority of children are capable of achieving considerably more in their learning, particularly at early level. These children are not yet making good enough progress in their learning. To improve attainment further, children need more opportunities to apply learning from taught lessons to real life contexts and across the curriculum. This will help them demonstrate understanding and application of learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Staff use the Fife Council tracking system to track attainment in literacy and numeracy. There are inconsistencies between the attainment recorded on the tracker and other records. Senior leaders and staff are not currently able to evidence accurately progress children are making from prior levels of attainment. They are not yet able to evidence where they are adding value to children's progress. Teachers recognise that they need to improve approaches to assessment and tracking to enable them to identify and address gaps in learning across the school.
- The majority of children identified as requiring additional support with their learning are making good progress in reading and spelling. This support is provided mainly by support for learning staff. Teachers need to be clearer about specific strategies they are implementing in class to improve individual children's progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children communicate confidently and articulately, and interact positively with staff and their peers. Almost all children talk confidently with a range of adults. At early level, most children listen attentively to the teacher to follow instructions. Children now need more opportunities to ask and answer questions to extend their learning and understanding with their peers through play. As children progress through the school, they make appropriate progress in turn-taking, contributing ideas and opinions. They clearly offer their views and build on the ideas of others in group and class discussions.

Reading

- At early level, children blend sounds to create and read simple words. Children now need to apply their reading skills and strategies in a range of play-based learning. Most children who have achieved first and second level demonstrate sound understanding of grammar and

punctuation to read aloud fluently and with expression. They discuss confidently key features of texts as appropriate to their stage. The majority of children describe some key features of non-fiction texts. Children at second level describe and give examples of text used to influence the reader, for example, rhetorical questions and emotive language. Across the school, most children would benefit from reading more challenging texts to enable them to develop and apply their reading skills further.

Writing

- At early level children need to write more regularly and for a range of purposes through their play. As they progress in their learning, children demonstrate increasing understanding of sentence construction and can link ideas in sentences. By the end of second level, most children make effective use of vocabulary choice and punctuation to engage the reader. Most children across the school write confidently for a range of purposes. They produce high-quality work during writing lessons. They discuss successfully what they need to do to improve their work. A majority of children across the school need to use punctuation more accurately to ensure their writing makes sense to the reader. Children now need greater opportunities to apply skills developed in writing lessons across the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children write, read and order numbers to ten. The majority count beyond ten and a few count confidently beyond 30. At first and second level most children carry out a variety of calculations accurately. Children at second level read and record time accurately and use this to calculate duration. Most children at second level identify and use decimal numbers to two decimal places confidently.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children develop their skills in identifying and naming simple shapes. At first level, almost all children identify a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children at second level demonstrate and explain their understanding of angles, classifying them using the appropriate mathematical vocabulary. At first and second level children now need to gain confidence in describing the properties of a range of shapes and objects.

Information handling

- At early level, most children arrange and sort objects by size and colour. Most children at first level use tally charts and bar graphs to collate and present data well. At second level, children develop the ability to extract, analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a variety of data. Children now need a greater range of opportunities to gather, analyse and interpret data in real contexts to develop an understanding of the importance of these skills for learning and life.

Attainment over time

- Overall, attainment across the school has been impacted negatively by periods of remote learning during the pandemic. School data indicates that attainment is now rising towards pre-pandemic levels, particularly in writing where improvements in attainment have been made.
- Year on year, attainment figures fluctuate due to ongoing changes in the school roll. Senior leaders and staff do not currently track the progress of different cohorts of learners. They are not able to discuss confidently the progress these groups are making from their prior learning,

as a result. These groups include children affected by poverty and children with poor attendance. Working together, senior leaders, teaching and support staff need to track progress more rigorously. This will help them identify gaps in learning, plan interventions to address gaps and monitor the impact these interventions have on overall attainment. This will support them to evaluate better the progress that individual children make.

- Children are not receiving their entitlement to breadth and depth of learning across the curriculum. As a result, most children are not yet making good enough progress in their learning in all curricular areas. Children need greater opportunities to build on prior learning in a planned and progressive way.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Overall, children need increased responsibility to develop their citizenship skills and lead aspects of school life. Children across the school are beginning to be more involved in a few pupil groups which are being re-established. A few children in P7 are developing leadership skills through their roles as house captains and prefects. Children are beginning to develop global citizenship and enterprise skills through occasional school events such as the Easter fun day for Mary's Meals. Children on the eco committee raise awareness of the need to recycle and reduce energy waste. Children now need to develop greater understanding of the skills for learning, life and work they develop through these roles.
- Teachers celebrate children's achievements from home, for example through the headteacher's 'Good News Book' and awards at assemblies. Children in P7 have achieved the John Muir Award. Staff and children now need to track children's achievements and skills in a more robust way to ensure children add value progressively to their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff do not understand sufficiently where there are gaps in children's learning, particularly for those experiencing barriers due to socio-economic circumstances. Senior leaders and staff need to work together to implement strategies and monitor the progress of those children affected by poverty. At present, they are not able to describe specific interventions in place or evidence the impact these are having for those children. Pupil Equity Funding is used to provide additional staffing. Senior leaders and staff now need to monitor more effectively the impact of this spending on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. They also need to monitor the impact on accelerating progress of children who need support.

Other relevant evidence

- Senior leaders need to develop more effective approaches to drive the strategic direction of school improvement and guide the pace of change.
- Children across the school are not yet getting their full entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education. Steps should be taken to address this as a matter of urgency.
- Teachers are at an early stage of teaching French throughout the school. Senior leaders have still to introduce the agreed second language, British Sign Language.

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.