

Summarised inspection findings

Clackmannanshire Schools Support Service

Clackmannanshire Council

3 March 2020

Key contextual information

Clackmannanshire Schools Support Service (CSSS) supports children and young people from across Clackmannanshire. Forty-three young people attend the secondary school. Seventeen children attend the primary school. The outreach service supports a number of children, young people and their families across the local authority.

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 school's vision, values and aims are aspirational. They are a highly-visual feature throughout the school including on the school badge. They focus very clearly on the skills which the school aims to support children and young people to develop. The vision, values and aims help staff to understand the purpose of planned learning. They support the collective high expectations which all staff have of children and young people. Parents are clear about the school's vision and what the school is aiming to achieve for their child. Partners play a key part in supporting children and young people and in delivering the curriculum. The school's vision is understood and embraced by all partners. Partners are actively involved in discussions about how they can contribute towards school improvement.
- All staff have a strong understanding of the socio-economic context of the local community. They use this knowledge well to reflect on the challenges faced by children and their families. They gather information about each individual child's needs and then plan effective interventions and personalised support tailored to the needs of each child and their family. Staff regularly review the effectiveness of their work and adapt their approaches where appropriate. Staff should now develop more robust systematic approaches to how they gather and analyse information on the effectiveness of their work. This will support them to identify better how to build on areas of strength. Improvement activities within the school improvement plan have been identified as a result of reflection on school, local and national priorities. The improvement plan details well the actions which staff are undertaking to improve the work of the school. Responsibility for acting on improvement priorities is clear and all staff welcome the opportunity to contribute to school improvement.
- Senior leadership across the school is highly effective. Senior leaders give a clear direction to improvement. They support staff to access a wide range of appropriate professional learning. This is supporting staff to have a very good understanding of how to meet each individual child's or young person's needs. Senior leaders carefully manage the pace of change. This results in staff consistently improving their practice. Staff are encouraged to be innovative and are supported very well when taking forward resulting initiatives. All staff are highly motivated and creative in their work. They seek to enhance the quality of their work with a clear focus of improving outcomes for children, young people and their families. Senior leaders should now look to ensure staffs' leadership opportunities are more formalised. This will support all staff to have a better understanding of how they are contributing to the school's improvement journey.

- The school's approaches to engaging parents in the life of the school are exemplary. As a result, parental voice is very strong within the school. Parents know they are valued members of the school community and that their opinion matters. They are fully involved in planning for their children's and young people's futures. Parents engage fully in the life of the school and participate in school activities such as the summer programme. As a result of the effectiveness of the school's approaches to supporting parents, a few have undertaken leadership roles within the local community. For example, as volunteers in the local community café.
- Following an identified need to improve children's and young people's reading, nominated staff are conducting a research and enquiry initiative with Strathclyde University. This is resulting in staff robustly analysing children's and young people's reading skills. They are gathering a range of data to determine the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving children's and young people's reading. Staff are using this information well to influence their delivery of reading across the school. Early indications show that this is resulting in improvements in most children's and young people's reading skills.
- The school works collaboratively with all mainstream schools in the local authority. Staff in the CSSS work alongside colleagues in mainstream schools to support effectively children and young people in their local school. This helps most children and young people to maintain successfully their placement at a mainstream school. CSSS staff model good practice and share their knowledge and expertise with colleagues in mainstream schools. This supports mainstream colleagues to improve their practice. Senior leaders in the CSSS support local authority colleagues in ensuring that approaches to staged intervention are robust. As a result, the local authority's approaches to allocating additional support are more equitable and based on children's and young people's needs.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Relationships between staff, children and young people are a strong feature across the school. Children and young people know they are respected and cared for. The welcoming ethos, prevalent throughout the school, is underpinned by mutual trust, encouragement and positive regard. Children and young people feel safe, valued and included in the life of the school. All staff are highly supportive of children and young people, and are keen to interact and engage them in their learning. All staff are highly skilled in identifying children's and young people's needs. They assess children's and young people's readiness to learn on a daily basis. This supports staff to know how children and young people are feeling and to adjust planned learning accordingly. Teaching approaches and communication styles are modified regularly according to the needs of children and young people to promote engagement. Children and young people are readily engaged in learning activities and are confident in discussing their learning throughout lessons. All staff use a variety of strategies to maintain positive relationships with children and young people. This leads to a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- In almost all lessons, creative and purposeful learning activities engage children and young people well in their learning. Lessons are often related to real world experiences, which captures children's and young people's interest and makes learning relevant. Teachers use digital technology effectively to create active learning opportunities. They explain the content of lessons clearly. Teachers should continue to develop further learning activities to ensure that they offer sufficient challenge and progression for all children and young people, particularly at the secondary stages. Most teachers use skilled questioning to extend learning and build upon children's and young people's understanding of their learning. They routinely provide high quality positive feedback to inform progress and build confidence.
- Staff, children and young people, parents and partners widely share and embody the school's values. There is a strong focus on inclusion and recognising children's and young people's successes and achievements across the school. Classroom environments are designed well to promote children's and young people's curiosity in their learning. Children and young people engage well in a range of curricular subjects, wider personal achievement opportunities, school events and a range of experiences that extend learning outside of the classroom.
- The school is highly responsive to children's and young people's needs and teachers often adapt the timetable to optimise learning opportunities and engage reluctant learners. The Physical Education Physical Activity School Sport (PEPASS) provision is a major strength in promoting children's and young people's engagement in their learning. The strong focus on developing leadership skills is supporting children and young people to develop their confidence. Children and young people enjoy engaging in physical activities in the wide range of after school clubs and school trips available to them. Children and young people are regularly given opportunity to shape their experiences within the PEPASS provision.

- Almost all teachers use a wide range of formative and summative assessment approaches effectively to monitor how well children and young people are progressing with their learning. The use of National Benchmarks is becoming embedded across the school, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Most teachers use questioning techniques well to assess learners' understanding. Almost all learning activities build on prior learning. There are robust quality assurance and moderation systems in place to support teachers to make professional judgements. The school should continue to work with neighbouring schools to identify further ways to engage in purposeful moderation activities. This will support staff to strengthen the systems currently in place.
- Effective processes are in place to monitor and evaluate children's and young people's progress with their learning. Tracking and monitoring procedures clearly demonstrate the progress that children and young people make over time and ensure that staff can plan for appropriate and effective interventions when required. Current approaches focus on monitoring progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Alongside progress towards achieving a level or a National Qualification, children's and young people's success in meeting individual targets is also carefully scrutinised. Children's and young people's participation in personal achievement activities is also measured systematically. The school should actively improve systems to track children's and young people's learning across all areas of the curriculum.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school's curriculum reflects the context of the school very well. The school's values are evident in the design of the curriculum. The curriculum has a strong focus on developing skills for learning, life and work. It aims to develop independent living skills to prepare children and young people for a positive post-school transition. The school has built effective links with an array of community partners who enhance the curriculum. This offers high levels of personalisation and choice for children and young people particularly in the senior phase.
- The school has developed a curriculum with a strong focus on wellbeing. This is enabling most children and young people to engage with learning experiences in a positive and supportive environment. The school now needs to continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that all children and young people have their full entitlement to physical education. In line with national guidance, staff should develop progressive, coherent programmes for children and young people at the broad general education (BGE). Children and young people need to access a broad and balanced curriculum throughout the school day to provide appropriate challenge for all.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school's approaches to engaging with parents are highly effective. All parents are treated as equals in their child's or young person's education. They are fully involved in planning their child's or young person's curriculum. Most parents play an integral part in determining how their child is supported in order to make progress in their learning. Staff use parents' preferred modes of communication to ensure they are kept fully informed of their child's or young person's progress. The school uses social media to support parents to keep up to date with developments in school. Family learning activities such as 'meet and eat' support parents new to the school to build relationships with existing parents and staff. Parents are very complimentary about the school, with a minority going as far as saying that they feel the school is part of their extended family and support network. The school's work with families is impacting positively on parents' wellbeing. Parents working with the school are developing their skills in new environments and undertaking roles in supporting other parents.

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

- Relationships across the school community are very positive. All staff treat children and young people with the highest levels of respect and courtesy. Staff model positive behaviours consistently throughout each day. Children and young people know they are cared for and valued as unique individuals. This results in a calm, caring and purposeful learning environment across the school. Staff are adept at de-escalating situations where children or young people experience difficulties or become distressed. The strength of the relationships within the school has led to no exclusions for over two years and a marked reduction in the use of safe holds.
- The school's approach to developing children's and young people's wellbeing is highly effective. Children's and young people's wellbeing is developed within a highly coordinated and progressive curriculum. Staff regularly adapt each child's or young person's individual learning pathway to maintain their interest and motivation. This ensures children and young people make the best possible progress in developing their wellbeing. Children and young people are developing their confidence and resilience well. They have a greater sense of self-belief and are becoming more able to reflect on their own learning and where they could improve. This is particularly evident in their behaviour and social interactions. The outreach team work with partners to support children and young people in local mainstream schools. Children and young people supported by the outreach team are developing their understanding of their emotions and feelings and how these affect their behaviours. As result, they are developing their social skills well. Partners support the school to deliver a curriculum which uses outdoor spaces very well to deliver activities which are improving children's and young people's wellbeing. As a consequence, children and young people are becoming more adept at taking on new challenges in unfamiliar settings.
- Staff across the school have a very good understanding of the wellbeing indicators and children's and young people's rights. The wellbeing indicators are used to good effect to support children and young people to evaluate their own progress. Children's and young people's individual targets are identified against the wellbeing indicators. Most children and young people have a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators and their importance. They can describe what each indicator means and what actions they can take to improve their wellbeing. The school should now develop further children's and young people's understanding of their rights across all areas of the school.
- All staff regularly access professional learning to support their understanding of legislative requirements. As a result, they have a very good understanding of their individual and collective responsibilities. Highly effective planning to meet children's and young people's support needs results in them accessing, or re-engaging with their learning very well, often following an extended period of interrupted learning. Targets in individualised educational programmes (IEPs) are creative and seek to address each child's or young person's barriers to

learning. Children and young people are fully involved in identifying and agreeing their targets. Children's and young people's progress against their targets in their IEPs is systematically tracked and monitored. This is leading to children and young people achieving success in areas which they have identified as being important to them.

- Children and young people have very good opportunities to learn about issues of equality and diversity. Staff ensure children and young people understand the importance of appreciating and respecting other people's differences and beliefs.
- The school is highly innovative in adapting the curriculum to support all children and young people. An online distance learning initiative is showing positive indications at engaging children and young people with significant mental health issues in learning. Children and young people who have not attended education for a significant period of time are now accessing, and making progress in learning through this initiative.
- Senior leaders support the work of the local authority to improve children's and young people's wellbeing across Clackmannanshire. Their involvement in the local authority's staged intervention processes ensures supports are targeted more effectively.

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 and achievement in literacy & numeracy

- All children and young people have experienced interrupted learning prior to attending the school. Most children and young people are making good progress in literacy and English. A minority are making very good progress with their reading. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in writing. Most children and young people are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics with a few making very good progress. At the senior phase, most young people are successfully attaining National 3 or National 4 course awards in both literacy and numeracy.

Literacy and English Listening and talking

- There is a clear focus on teaching listening and talking skills across the school.
- Overall, children are making good progress in developing and applying listening and talking skills in their learning. Almost all children and young people listen and respond respectfully to each other and to staff.
- At the early level, most children listen to staff and follow directions and instructions. They enjoy listening to stories and can name characters and events. The well informed approaches to the acquisition of vocabulary results in children making good progress in their ability to talk about and understand their learning. Most children at the early level respond well to a range of questions about their learning. At first level, the majority of children are developing confidence and share their views and ideas. They respond well to literal questions about texts and give clear explanations for their answers. At first level, most children demonstrate that they can take turns and contribute their ideas and opinions. In most instances children listen well to the views of others. The majority of children respond to literal questions about texts. A few understand inferential questions and can explain their answers. At second level, most children increasingly communicate their ideas and views with confidence. Most can voice their opinions clearly and build on one another's ideas. They talk knowledgably about a variety of genre and make use of vocabulary related to their learning. A few children can articulately share extensive knowledge and specialist vocabulary about areas of interest to them. Evidence-based approaches in listening and talking is closing the vocabulary gap, which staff have identified as an area of improvement within the school.

Reading

- Most children and young people in the primary and secondary centres are making good progress in reading, with a few making very good progress.

- At the early level, most children identify initial sounds and a few apply this skill to read unfamiliar words. They understand that an author is a writer and that an illustrator creates pictures for a story. They enjoy retelling stories they have heard. At first level, the majority of children read with confidence. They identify and discuss their favourite texts and are capable of being challenged through a broader range of reading experiences. By second level, most children are developing skills in response to complex questions about what they have read. They engage with a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts and make good use of class libraries. Literacy rich environments motivate most children and young people to enjoy reading. The school's approaches to supporting reading is leading to improvements in children's and young people's attainment. Most children at first level can spell the most commonly used words. They use their knowledge of letter patterns and spelling rules to spell unfamiliar words. This is supporting improvements in children's abilities to communicate.

Writing

- The quality of writing across the school is not yet of a consistently high quality. The majority of children lack motivation to communicate in writing. Staff have a clear understanding of the reasons for this and should continue to seek to improve children's writing. At early level, most children are developing confidence to write independently. The majority can form letters and attempt to write simple words and sentences accurately. At first level, most children use an increasing variety of connectives and are developing writing skills for a range of purposes. At first and second levels, children use a range of strategies to improve their spelling. At second and third level, most children can apply a wide range of punctuation and interesting vocabulary to engage the reader.

Numeracy and mathematics

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, most children and young people demonstrate confidence in number use and explain strategies in calculations well. At the primary stages, most children are proficient at telling the time to quarter past and quarter to on both analogue and digital clocks. Through the process of baking and cooking, children demonstrate their ability to weigh, measure and judge timings. Most children and young people at the secondary stages are confident in using number concepts. They can use multiples, factors, decimals and percentages to solve problems and apply mental strategies.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children at the primary stages are able to identify and describe the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects.

Information handling

- Most children and young people are able to identify suitable ways to collect data, organise it in a chart and display it using bar graphs. They are able to interpret and draw conclusions relating to their data. Through data interpretation they can make predictions and understand mathematical vocabulary such as likely, probable, certain and possible.

Attainment over time

- In recent years, according to the school's own data, most young people in the senior phase achieve a good range and number of National Qualifications course awards and units, predominantly at National 3 and National 4. Supported by curriculum development in the senior phase, most young people are achieving course awards and units across an increasing number of subject areas, year on year. Last session, these included English, mathematics, administration, art & design, religious and moral education, information technology and design technology.

- Most children and young people are successfully meeting their individual targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff are also beginning to demonstrate the school's impact on children and young people from admission to leaving school. This continued focus on 'added value' will provide valuable information on outcomes and the performance of the school as a whole.
- The school is very successful in supporting children and young people, previously disengaged from learning, to re-engage with education. Staff ably help them to develop their confidence and readiness to learn. Staff now need to focus on raising attainment for all children and young people. A minority of children and young people have the potential to succeed further with their attainment. Staff should ensure they are providing tasks and activities which provide sufficient challenge for all children and young people. The school should also revisit the length of the school week to maximise children's and young people's engagement.
- Most children and young people improve their school attendance upon placement at the school. However, a minority of young people at the secondary stages continue to have poor levels of attendance. Increased focus on supporting children and young people to improve further their school attendance would impact positively on attainment, particularly at the secondary stages.
- The school's curriculum, and the quality of relationships across the school, is proving very successful in developing children's and young people's wellbeing. This is supporting the school's success in promoting positive behaviour. As a result there have been no exclusions in the last two years. There are also very few safe holds, well below most schools within the social and emotional needs sector.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children and young people are achieving a wide range of additional skills and attributes in sport, performance arts, leadership, communication and team work.
- Leadership opportunities for children and young people include sports leadership, WOW ambassador, musical and drama performances and student council. Children and young people enjoy the challenge when leading their own learning. They take responsibility for, and personal pride in, their achievements. Leadership roles are developing their self-confidence and a sense of working in partnership with staff at the school. The school should develop further how children and young people could be given greater opportunities to undertake leadership roles within the school.
- Young people are improving their team work and fitness through participation in a wide variety of sports such as, cycling, climbing, archery, badminton, football and athletics. A few young people have also achieved Sports Leader Awards and Sport Scotland Bronze award.
- The school has started to track wider achievement to ensure all children have equal opportunities to participate. Staff recognise that younger children need to participate in clubs and have increased opportunities for them to develop greater responsibility and independence.
- The school is very successful in its approaches to supporting health and wellbeing and its support for children and families. Partnership work with employability programmes is enabling young people to demonstrate better teamwork, and improved confidence and communication. Young people talk positively about the help partners provide to support them

to prepare for their futures as young adults.

- This session almost all young people leaving the centre have a planned positive destination. In previous years the majority of young people have moved on to sustained positive destinations. Based on the school's own data, there is an improving picture of initial positive destinations year on year. Most young people who left school in June 2019 have sustained their initial destinations. The school should ensure this improvement is sustained.
- Children and young people are offered a wide range of recognised and accredited youth awards. Children's and young people's participation in these award programmes is growing. Staff recognise and celebrate children's and young people's achievements at assemblies and in classes.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and SLT demonstrate a clear understanding, and detailed knowledge of, children's and young people's socio-economic circumstances. They understand very well how these contribute to children and young people experiencing barriers to their learning. Teachers work effectively with a wide range of partners and collaborate well with these partners to ensure no child is disadvantaged. This is supporting children and young people to make good progress from their prior levels of attainment. The school is closing the attainment gap for those children and young people most affected by deprivation, particularly in reading. Staff should develop further the school's approaches to tracking and monitoring of the impact of targeted interventions. This will support staff to ensure interventions lead to continued improvements in outcomes for children and young people.
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is focused on raising attainment in health and wellbeing and in particular, emotional and physical wellbeing. The school should ensure tracking and monitoring of the impact of PEF evidences improvements in outcomes for those children and young people most affected by deprivation.

School Empowerment

- CSSS staff play a key role in creating conditions to enable mainstream colleagues to feel empowered when working with young people who display challenging behaviours in a mainstream setting.
- Staff in the school feel they are empowering colleagues in mainstream settings through modelling practice when cooperatively teaching with them in mainstream settings. They are supporting a range of training opportunities to support mainstream colleagues to improve their practice. They are working alongside partners to develop a more equitable system of resource allocation across the local authority. Staff feel this is supporting mainstream colleagues to have a better understanding of needs across the local authority.
- Discussions on empowerment extended into how staff feel they are empowering children and young people by engaging them in their learning. They feel they are empowering parents through their work with partners in the local community.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's exemplary approaches to engaging parents and partners. Staff have created an open, supportive culture where all parents feel valued. The effectiveness of these approaches can be seen in the improvements in the wellbeing of parents and families. Parents have found employment and taken up volunteering opportunities as a result of the school's support.

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.