

Summarised inspection findings

Riverside Primary School and Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Riverside Primary School is located in Craigshill, Livingston. It is the oldest school in Livingston having opened in 1965. Almost all children attending the school live in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. A significant minority of children have additional support needs. The headteacher has been in post for five years and is supported by an acting depute headteacher and two principal teachers. The school has experienced a number of staffing changes. The school was affected recently by problems with the school building. This has had an impact on space available across the school.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- In recent years the school team has developed a shared vision, values and aims. These are displayed around the school and are well known by staff and children. Most teachers make appropriate reference to school values during lessons and in supporting children to behave in class.
- All teachers and support staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school in its community. Staff place a strong emphasis on developing caring and respectful relationships, where all children and their families are valued. Families feel welcome in the school and appreciate the range of support they can access from staff and partner agencies. School staff work well with partners from across schools and services. Partners are supportive of the school's aspirations to improve outcomes for all children.
- The school team is committed to change and improvement. The headteacher has developed a culture where all staff feel confident and are willing to engage in and lead the process of change. For example, staff at all levels take responsibility for leading improvements in numeracy, technology and literacy. Teachers and support staff access professional learning opportunities, well linked to the school's improvement priorities. There has been a whole school focus on developing nurturing approaches and promoting positive behaviour. Staff also engage in learning around play and pedagogy. Across the school, these developments are beginning to have a positive impact on learning and teaching. However, the quality of children's experiences is not yet consistently high. Staff do not have a shared understanding of the many features of change currently being developed across the school. To lead to better outcomes for children, school leaders should ensure a more strategic overview of developments and support staff to see the connections across improvement activity. There is a need to ensure that improved rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring supports staff to deliver effective learning and teaching. To ensure all learners needs are met school leaders should work with staff to evaluate learner's experiences more effectively. The quality of the classroom environments and variability in children's experiences does not always support them to demonstrate appropriate behaviour in school. The school has identified the need to involve parents and partners in self-evaluation and improvement activity more effectively.

- School leaders have taken steps to offer children increased leadership roles across the school. This is at an early stage of development and is beginning to support children to understand leadership skills.
- There is a need to review school improvement processes to focus on a manageable number of key priorities. Across the school, staff demonstrate care for children’s wellbeing. They now need to raise expectations for standards across the school, with a relentless focus on raising attainment.

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

- Across the school, most children are friendly, polite and enjoy positive relationships with staff. The school's vision, values and aims underpin a supportive and caring ethos. Most children can discuss the school values and give examples of how they demonstrate these in every-day school life. Most children are engaged in their learning, and interact well with each other during learning activities. They work well in groups and in pairs. They have insufficient opportunity to work independently. In most classes, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. Most children feel they can ask for help or support when needed.
- In all classes, staff use praise well to promote positive relationships and to improve children's self-esteem. The majority of children enjoy their learning, and most feel that they are progressing with their schoolwork. When given the opportunity, children use digital technology confidently, for example, when involved in research or to publish and record their work. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop the use of digital technology to promote further motivating and relevant learning activities.
- In a significant minority of lessons low level disruptive behaviour impacts on children's learning. Staff should continue to promote positive behaviour, and consider how learning and teaching approaches are meeting the needs of all children. Staff should ensure that the language of rights is more evident in children's learning.
- Children contribute to the life of the school through their involvement in pupil groups including the pupil council, eco group and literacy champions. All children are represented in one of these groups. The work of these groups is beginning to help children to understand better the skills for learning, life and work. Staff are at the very early stages of making effective use of the outdoors to provide interesting contexts for learning across the curriculum.
- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching across the school is inconsistent. Staff need to continue to share effective practice to ensure all children enjoy consistently high-quality learning experiences across all stages. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop play-based learning approaches across the early stages that reflect national guidance. They need to ensure that they review and evaluate regularly the impact of this approach on children's learning and progress.
- Across the school, staff share the purpose of lessons. As a result, most children are becoming increasingly clear about how they can achieve success. In the few lessons where engagement in learning is stronger, children experience a range of differentiated and challenging tasks appropriate to their needs. Teachers are at the early stages of improving the use of questions to develop children's higher-order skills and enhance the quality of interactions. Teachers need to plan more opportunities for children to lead their own learning.

- Children and staff use learning logs, 'Wow' jotters and 'reflection time' increasingly well to reflect on children's learning, and set targets for their next steps. A few children would like more opportunity to shape the purpose and relevance of their learning. This should enable them to take responsibility for contributing to, influencing and planning their own learning.
- Approaches to assessment across the school are inconsistent. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop a more coherent whole-school approach to assessment. They should be clearer about how assessment leads to effective interventions that support children's progress in learning. Whilst staff gather assessment information in literacy and numeracy, this is of variable quality and is not yet integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff need to develop clear information on children's progress in all curriculum areas. They should continue to deepen their understanding of the national benchmarks, and establish further the process of moderation across all areas of the curriculum.
- Across the school, children receive a range of oral and written feedback to help them understand their progress in learning, and how their work could improve. Teachers should continue to work on the quality of feedback provided, to ensure that all children are clear about the agreed strategies they should use to support their learning. While children have a range of opportunities for self- and peer-assessment, this needs to be developed further. Children are not confident to give their peers quality feedback.
- Teachers are beginning to develop more confidence in interpreting and responding to attainment data to support planning. Regular tracking and monitoring meetings between teachers and senior leaders focus on children's progress in learning. Senior leaders, working with staff, need to ensure there is a consistent and manageable approach to planning. There is a need to use planning and assessment more effectively to support progression and continuity in learning as children progress through the school.
- Senior leaders, with staff, track and monitor termly the progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. Tracking and monitoring procedures identify key learning and progress towards children's attainment of a Curriculum for Excellence level. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop this process for all curricular areas in line with the school improvement plan.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school's curriculum rationale is under review. The current version reflects the development and implementation of a refreshed focus on vision, values and aims. There is clear reference to developing the four capacities. The school context is at the heart of the curriculum rationale, and key drivers and priorities reflect the needs of learners in their community. All staff are focused on improving children's wellbeing, skills and knowledge across literacy and numeracy.
- All staff are continuing to build their confidence in using West Lothian progression pathways to inform planning across the curriculum. Staff have selected and agreed a range of core approaches and resources to support learning and teaching across literacy, numeracy and science. This has been well supported through continuous professional learning opportunities. Staff need to ensure children access all aspects of maths regularly.
- Children experience good quality learning in regular, discrete technology activities. This is supporting improved progress in this area. A new health and wellbeing programme is in the early stages of implementation.
- Staff at early level work well together to offer smooth transition from nursery into P1. This includes pastoral support for children and families and learning opportunities for parents. Staff across early level should continue to work together to ensure children access progression in their learning and play. Staff have regular opportunities to work across the Inveralmond Cluster, including supporting learners as they move from P7 to S1. As the school continues to improve the curriculum, staff should develop cluster activity to ensure learning across the curriculum builds on children's prior learning.
- Staff across the school recognise the need to continue to refresh and improve the curriculum to take better account of recent national guidance and ensure relevance, progression and depth across all curriculum areas. This improvement activity should include children, parents and partners. Staff have also identified the need to develop their understanding of interdisciplinary learning.
- Children would benefit from learning within contexts that better reflect 21st century Scotland. Children at P4 and P7 enjoy singing opportunities from visiting staff, however, children across the school do not all experience regular quality learning and teaching across expressive arts.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and staff are committed to engaging parents in all aspects of the life and work of the school. The majority of parents are satisfied with the school, and report that their child likes being at Riverside Primary School. A minority of parents feel their views are not taken into account when changes are made in the school.
- The majority of parents feel that their child is making good progress at school. A minority would like more information about how their child is assessed, and how school staff can help them develop their child's learning at home. Senior leaders have taken steps to increase parental engagement in children's wellbeing through the employment of a family support worker.
- The majority of parents report that they are satisfied with the quality of the teaching in the school. They feel staff know their child well as an individual. A minority of parents would like more helpful, regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing.
- School staff use a range of ways to communicate with parents including letters, text messages and social media. Parents are invited to attend a variety of events including parents' evenings, sharing learning sessions and school shows. Senior leaders and staff should consider how to develop ways in which parents can be more effectively involved in evaluating the work of the school. They should evaluate rigorously the impact of parental engagement on raising attainment and achievement.

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

satisfactory

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 recognises that positive relationships and nurturing principles are central to developing a whole school approach to wellbeing. Through professional development with partner agencies and modelling positive relationships, staff and children are developing a shared understanding of 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC). Staff regularly check with children how they are feeling to ensure they are ready to learn and the majority adapt their approaches where necessary. The majority of children can now use the wellbeing indicators to report on their personal wellbeing. Senior leaders plan to further develop a shared understanding of wellbeing across the community through sharing these approaches with parents.
- Most parents and children, and almost all staff and partners, feel they are treated with respect and in a fair and just manner. Children are beginning to be more involved in decisions about the life and work of the school through recently established Pupil Voice Groups. Most children say that they feel safe in the school. A few senior pupils provide effective role models for others by supporting younger children to improve their reading and leading assemblies with a focus on raising awareness of dyslexia and children's wellbeing. This activity is beginning to help build their confidence and leadership skills. The school should evidence the outcome of these activities for the children involved.
- A few children who are disengaged from their learning, or have additional support needs, benefit from a range of flexible and responsive strategies to support them to participate in learning. These include a range of nurturing activities designed to help children to build skills to respond appropriately in specific situations and form positive relationships. Staff are exploring the most effective approaches to monitoring the impact of these interventions on children's wellbeing and achievement. School leaders should monitor children's movement in and out of class across the school week to access additional support. At all stages children miss learning and social activity in their own class setting and often miss the start of lessons. This has an impact on their confidence to participate appropriately in class lessons and narrows their curriculum experience. A review of in class support is needed to ensure that support is targeted appropriately and children are settled and ready to learn. In too many lessons the behaviour of others impacts on children's wellbeing and learning.
- The school's recently implemented health and wellbeing programme is at the very early stage of supporting children to develop their understanding of how to be healthy. Staff are keen to extend the use of outdoor spaces and the community to promote positive relationships and wellbeing in other contexts. The school should continue to support children to develop and sustain healthy lifestyles. Most children would benefit from increased physical activity.

- Senior leaders and staff need to support children to take full advantage of their lunchtime meals. Staff should take account of national guidance to develop approaches to support children to eat well and reduce the considerable amount of food waste.
- Individualised education plans (IEPs) for children who need them are reviewed regularly with parents and partners. Children receive helpful, child friendly IEPs which are helping them to understand what they need to do to improve in their learning. Children who need support plans can attend regular meetings to review their progress where appropriate. In some cases, desired outcomes for these children could be more specific. The Support for Learning Team provide helpful support and advice to staff and parents. An overview of learners' progress in achieving targets over time would help the school to evidence their progress more clearly. This will provide the school with important information about the effectiveness of support strategies and interventions. To improve outcomes, school leaders should ensure that all teachers use the support strategies identified in children's IEPs to plan tasks and approaches which meet their different learning needs.
- The school has appropriate systems for responding to accidents and incidents to ensure the school's duty of care to children. The school should continue to follow up any bullying incidents ensuring that those involved understand when resolution has been reached.
- Almost all staff have a good awareness of individual children and their families and the school's wider context in the community. They are committed to promoting equality. The family support worker provides direct support for a few children and families at home and in school. Early signs show that this is supporting a few more vulnerable children to improve their attendance and transition successfully into secondary school. The school should consider extending this role to include the nursery class. A significant minority of children are late for school each day. The staff team is sensitive to individual needs and welcomes children to school. However, too many children are missing important learning, including children with poor attendance. In addition to supporting children once they are in school, further action is required to reduce lateness and improve attendance.
- The school promotes some aspects of equality, diversity and tackling discrimination in assemblies and aspects of the wider curriculum. A few children have a good understanding of issues and challenges relating to equalities and inclusion. However, the majority are not yet confident in their ability to recognise and challenge discrimination should they become aware of it. Children are not yet able to articulate how their rights impact on their own wellbeing and that of others. A few children can demonstrate some awareness of equality and diversity issues. Senior leaders recognise that they need to do more to develop this aspect of children's learning and wellbeing.
- The school systematically monitors and tracks the progress of children experiencing a range of barriers to learning, including socio-economic disadvantage. Early indications show that identified children are beginning to make progress in literacy and numeracy. Individual programmes are supporting a small group of children to improve basic reading and writing skills.
- Staff and partners work together to develop approaches to help particular groups of children to manage their anxieties and engage in lessons. A significant number continue to find this a challenge. The school should continue to review its approach to prioritising support for children with the most complex additional support needs. This is needed to ensure they make the best use of support staff skills and provide the right kind of support for children when they need it.

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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Data provided by the school for session 2018-19 shows that most children achieved the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. However, teacher's professional judgements of a level are not yet fully robust. Senior leaders should continue to support all teachers to raise expectations of what children produce through more regular and coherent monitoring of children's experiences. There is a need to ensure teachers make reliable judgements in relation to children's attainment.

Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory.

Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking is satisfactory. Children need to develop their listening and talking skills and apply these appropriately across the curriculum and in social activities. At early level, the majority of children follow simple instructions, and listen and respond to others appropriately. They are not yet able to take turns and use appropriate body language when engaging with others. At first level, the majority of children communicate clearly and audibly. They respond well to a range of questions to show an understanding of what they have heard. They are not yet able to listen and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way. At second level, the majority of children communicate clearly and audibly. They respond to literal questions to show an understanding of what they have heard. Children are not yet able to build on the contributions of others or show respect for their views.

Reading

- Attainment in reading is good. At early level, most children engage with a range of texts and share their likes and dislikes. They are beginning to use knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. A few are beginning to read simple sentences. At first level, most children explain preferences for particular texts or authors. They read aloud familiar text well and identify the main ideas of texts. A few children read using appropriate expression. At second level, most children explain preferences for particular texts and authors giving supportive detail. They apply a range of reading skills and strategies to read and understand texts. The majority recognise techniques used to influence the reader. A few children make appropriate links between their learning in reading and writing.

Writing

- Attainment in writing is satisfactory. At early level, the majority of children are beginning to write to reflect their own experiences. A few children write a sentence using a capital letter and full stop. Across first and second level, children need to write more frequently across a range of genre. At first level, the majority of children create texts using appropriate structure and

punctuate most sentences accurately. They are not yet including all relevant information in their writing. At second level, the majority of children write fluently and use paragraphs effectively to separate ideas. They are beginning to apply a few features of imaginative writing such as direct speech and strong openers into their extended writing. A few children attempt to engage the reader through appropriate use of language.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Children need to apply their developing skills in new and unfamiliar contexts.

Number, money and measurement

- At early level, most children recall number sequences within 20 and add confidently within 10. They are less confident in recalling backwards number sequences within 20 and subtracting within 10. At first level, the majority of children describe a range of strategies to support their mental calculations. They are not yet able to apply these when solving real life problems. They calculate fractions of a whole number using their knowledge of multiplication and division facts. A few children convert appropriately between metres and centimetres. At second level, the majority of children describe a range of strategies to support different calculations. They are less confident in applying these strategies to real life contexts. The majority convert well between common units of measurement and calculate simple fractions of a quantity.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children understand the language of position and direction and recognise two-dimensional shapes. At first level, the majority of children identify lines of symmetry in common two-dimensional shapes. They are not yet able to identify right angles and use this to compare and describe the size of other angles. At second level, the majority of children describe two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using some specific vocabulary. They describe and classify a range of angles identified using appropriate mathematical language. They are less confident in applying their knowledge of the properties of a circle.

Information handling

- At early level, most children contribute to pictorial displays to represent children's favourite pancake toppings. They match and sort items in a variety of ways. At first level, the majority of children are beginning to use the language of probability to describe the likelihood of events occurring. They are less confident in using different ways to display data. At second level, the majority of children are beginning to identify a few ways of displaying data accurately. They are less confident in choosing the most effective method for the given task. They use the language of probability appropriately to describe the likelihood of simple events occurring.

Attainment over time

- Most children are making satisfactory progress over time. The recent focus on developing reading enables children to demonstrate key skills and strategies. This supports their development as readers. As a result, children's attainment in reading has improved over time. Senior leaders and teachers discuss children's progress and identify interventions to support their learning. Staff monitor these interventions regularly which is beginning to show a positive impact on individual children's progress. Teachers should continue to develop their skills in using a range of assessment information to support their professional judgements of children's attainment. This should help to support more robust judgements on children's progress. Senior leaders are not yet tracking attainment information across all areas of the curriculum.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children access a range of achievements through active schools festivals, lunchtime and breakfast clubs organised across the school year. This supports them to develop skills linked to resilience and teamwork. All children demonstrate increasing levels of responsibility through a range of learner participation groups. This helps to develop children's creativity and thinking skills. Children in P7 develop their confidence through the role of house captains, vice-captains and prefects. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated on the school's achievement tree and at regular assemblies. Senior leaders are not yet tracking children's wider achievements. Children need to be clearer about the skills they are developing through their achievements within and outwith school.

Equity for all learners

- Staff recognise the needs of both children and families and understand the socio-economic context of the local area. Using the school's allocation of Pupil Equity Fund, a number of targeted interventions are reducing barriers to children's attainment and achievement. For example, additional staff provide emotional support for a few identified children and their families. This is showing early signs of improvements in their attendance and engagement in learning. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact of these interventions and ensure there is clear evidence of improved outcomes for children.

School Empowerment

- Empowering teachers and practitioners with a focus on improvement.
- Senior leaders continue to develop a culture where staff are empowered to be involved in the process of change. All teachers have lead roles to develop key aspects of school improvement and supporting the development of pupil voice. A few teachers have also engaged with additional responsibilities linked to an area of interest or expertise.
- Teachers have engaged in professional learning linked to the teaching of reading. This involved creating 'small tests of change' in their own classrooms relating to developing their practice. Teachers also engaged in professional reading to support their understanding. They have used their learning to help develop common approaches to the teaching of reading across the school. A few teachers engage in professional learning to support their leadership skills.
- Staff welcome opportunities to engage in professional dialogue both within and outwith the school. This helps to support the development of a collective understanding of standards, pedagogy and assessment strategies. They work well with the cluster depute headteacher for numeracy and the school's numeracy coordinator to develop their understanding of approaches to teaching numeracy. Staff value opportunities to share practice with each other which helps develop their understanding of current pedagogy.
- Children are empowered to develop aspects of the life of the school through the recently established learner participation groups. The pupil council are developing the 'Riverside passport of experiences'. This supports children to develop opportunities for achievements outwith the local community. Children need increased opportunities to use these developing skills more regularly to lead their own learning.

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.