

Summarised inspection findings

St Joseph's Primary School

West Dunbartonshire Council

SEED No: 8313121

06 March 2018

Key contextual information

St Joseph's Primary School is a single stream denominational school in West Dunbartonshire Council. The school roll is 184. The school is currently led by the substantive DHT, who is acting HT while the substantive HT is seconded to the authority as a Senior Education Officer. 88% of the children who attend the school come from the least advantaged 20% of backgrounds as defined by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). 52.4% of children are registered for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The school has been allocated £103,200 through the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). Attendance is in line with the national average.

The special provision within the school consists of four Rainbow Bases supporting a total of 27 children from across West Dunbartonshire. All children are in Primary 1, 2 or 3 and are offered a place in one of the Rainbow Bases following assessment and recommendation from a local authority placement group. These children have a range of additional support needs with most children attending the Rainbow Base full-time. Nine children have a shared placement where they attend the Rainbow Base in the morning and attend mainstream classes in the afternoon.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- There is an implicit, shared vision between staff, parents and partners for the work of the school. This is embodied in the clear inclusive ethos which is commented on by visitors to the school, including parents and partners. This vision involves the inclusion of all children and a dedication to closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The present published version of the school's vision, values and aims dates from 2012. The school is aware that there have been many changes in staffing during the intervening years and that the vision, values and aims were agreed before the Rainbow Bases were placed in the school. The school realises that the vision, values and aims now need to be revisited with stakeholders so that they are current and are shared. There are plans to undertake this work in a few months' time. The school agrees that this should be a priority given the amount of time which has passed and the changes which have taken place.
- Staff are committed to doing their best for all children in the school. Despite the number of recent changes in staffing, teachers and support staff are equally dedicated in their commitment to meeting the needs of children.
- Senior leaders have provided strong and enabling leadership which has developed and sustained the strong positive ethos of the school. This is particularly noteworthy given the number of changes in teaching staff, the introduction of the Rainbow Bases and the

frequent changes in senior leadership in the school over the past few years. Parents and partners have commended the roles of the current acting headteacher and the substantive headteacher in leading the school.

- Senior leaders and the wider staff have an extremely good awareness of the backgrounds of children who attend the school. The school now needs to ensure that the curriculum rationale and content reflects the nature of the school community in the same way that it has been implementing specialist approaches such as nurture and PATHs to meet the identified needs of children.
- The school has had an appropriate approach to planning for improvement for a number of years. Every May, staff are involved in reviewing the previous year's improvement plan and agreeing priorities for the next year. There are good links with the local community, businesses and parents. The school should now build on these positive relationships and its successful work with partners by encouraging them to become more involved in the review of progress and the improvement planning process. More work can also be done to ensure that the school targets are as specific as possible and that impact is carefully measured and demonstrated.
- School leaders ensure that time is protected for staff training opportunities, both within and outside the school. This includes time to work with other schools, including the development of shared assessment approaches. Staff also report that there are many leadership opportunities available to them and almost every teacher has some area of specialist responsibility. They are also encouraged to use their own skills and interests to provide learning opportunities for children as part of the curriculum or as an out of school activity.
- Planned observations of teaching and learning are a helpful way for senior leaders to assess the impact of teachers' planning as well as monitoring the quality of children's experiences, and the impact of new approaches to pedagogy. Frequent recent changes in school leadership, along with other factors, has led to some inconsistency of approach. The leaderships team has plans to improve approaches to monitoring the work of the school and recognises the need to be more robust and developmental.
- Staff are encouraged to look at ways to improve their own practice. This is discussed during staff annual reviews or at other appropriate points. Teachers have had a range of different professional learning opportunities in recent years and a significant number of new approaches have been introduced. The school should review these approaches and consider whether it should refine rather than extend the number of approaches it uses.
- Learning assistants feel valued in the school and enjoy their work. They feel well supported and are able to gain access to appropriate training opportunities.
- Whilst staff are working hard to improve equity in the school, more work could now be done to ensure greater equality of outcomes. Taking account of the unique school setting, and the data and knowledge available, staff should continue to develop their rationale to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

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 very welcoming and happy ethos. There are very positive relationships across all areas of the school. Children are eager to learn and are actively participating in their learning. Most children are engaged, motivated and interact well during activities. They demonstrate resilience in their day to day life within the school. The children are regularly provided with opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. This is supporting them to be confident individuals and effective contributors. Staff regularly seek the views of children about what they would like to learn. We encourage the school to start to work on children's rights and further strengthen children's voice across the school.
- The interests of the children are taken into account through the regular use of KWL grids used at the start of interdisciplinary learning topics where children are encouraged at the beginning of a topic to indicate what they know and what they would like to learn during study. Children have the opportunity to take part in master classes, pupil choice afternoons and regular focus weeks. The master classes and activity afternoons engage and motivate children in a range of ways. The classes and activity afternoons offer the opportunity for children to follow their own interests and experience different activities such as cross stitch and looking at art in nature. Across the school, in most classes, children are given the opportunity to use digital technology enhance their learning. In almost all classes, the interactive white boards are used by staff regularly to display learning intentions and success criteria. In a few classes children use the whiteboards interactively during lessons.
- The school has created a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) classroom and a food technology classroom. These classrooms are very well resourced and the children are enjoying and are motivated by the them. These classrooms provide children with dedicated areas to develop their STEM and practical food work. In the STEM classroom children are given the opportunity to hypothesise, develop fair tests and draw conclusions. The community contract developed in the STEM classroom supports team work within these areas. Staff should continue to review the activities and skills carried out in STEM and be clear about the purpose of the activities and how they help children to make progress in their learning.
- The majority of children understand the purpose of their learning and how this relates to real life situations. A few children are able to talk confidently about the skills they are learning. In a few lessons children are given opportunities to lead the learning. Further planned regular opportunities for children to lead the learning could now be considered.
- Teachers are well organised and give clear explanations and instructions. In almost all lessons teachers are enthusiastic and motivated. This enthusiasm and motivation

effectively engages the children in their learning. In almost all lessons, timers are used to keep the pace of the lesson brisk and the children on track and learning intentions and success criteria are used effectively. In a few classes teachers use effective questioning to promote higher order thinking skills. In the majority of lessons, a review of the activity concluded the lesson. Children are encouraged to use a range of strategies to peer and self-assess. In the best practice, written and oral feedback is effective and supports children to know what they need to do next to improve. A review of all aspects of the teachers' use of assessment for learning strategies should be carried out to maximise the impact of these strategies on supporting children in their learning.

- Staff regularly carry out a range of summative and formative assessments. The school is data rich. There is scope for all assessment information to be used much more effectively to inform classroom activities. Assessment is not yet integral to the planning of learning and teaching. The assessment information will help to inform differentiation, pace and depth within the classroom. On too many occasions there are whole class lessons which are not appropriately differentiated to meet the varying learning needs of children in the class.
- The school has a wide range of data and a range of tracking systems both at class and whole school levels. The senior leadership team and class teachers regularly review this data and discuss progress at tracking meetings. The school has data to show progress of children in different areas of literacy and numeracy, including data from the collaborative action research (CAR) projects carried out last session. Further analysis of this information is now required to understand the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve the outcomes for all learners. The headteacher is aware of the need to continue to review the tracking systems to bring together the most relevant information in one place to inform discussion on planning for improvement. The school has information regarding how different groups of children are achieving, including those facing additional challenges.
- The school is aware of the need to review planning to support more focused learning, teaching and assessment. The school has been receptive to ideas and suggestions for improvement in this area. Changes to planning will support and further improve information for the tracking and monitoring system.
- The school has taken part in a cross marking exercise in writing and is working with the learning community on assessment in numeracy. The school has correctly identified the need to develop their moderation practices to include discussions on planning learning, teaching and assessment and to further develop their understanding of standards to support more robust and reliable assessment decisions.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

- Flexible, ability-based groupings are in place for P3 to P7 classes during numeracy lessons. These are currently focused on the topic of fractions. The ability-based aspect enables teachers to bring together appropriate groups of children across classes and mobility between groupings is possible. However, there is a lack of differentiation within these groups and a wide range of approaches to lessons is taken by teachers. The pupil experience is therefore extremely varied during these lessons as is the level of pace and challenge. Better use could also be made of learning assistants who support these sessions.
- School staff have designed and recently revised a three-year cycle of interdisciplinary learning (IDL), with specific identified topics. Each of these topics has been cross-referenced with relevant 'Global Goals'. They have been designed with 'bundles' of experiences and outcomes which should be overtaken if the topic is undertaken appropriately. It is not clear that these topics will help children to progressively develop their skills, nor that this is the best way to undertake curricular areas other than literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The school should review its approach to IDL, ensuring that there is a balanced curriculum which allows children to build on their prior learning and to make appropriate progress.
- The lower school has been developing play based pedagogy as part of their STEM strategy. Teachers in P1, 2, and 3 plan collectively to develop progressive play activities.
- The school provides some options for choice in the curriculum which children respond well to. There are master classes which are run by staff at identified points in the year and children can decide, within limits, which of these that they would like to attend. These are based on staff and pupil interests and are cross-referenced with experiences and outcomes. It is unclear how these provide progression in learning and build on prior learning. Staff report that it is a valuable focus for discussion in class when children share what they have learned from the different master classes.
- The school also builds in flexibility by frequent use of the KWL approach where children are encouraged at the beginning of a topic to indicate what they know and what they would like to learn during study. After the topic they review and detail what they have actually learned. Whilst it is helpful to encourage children to consider what they would like to learn during a topic, the professional judgement of staff is also important to ensure that learning experiences are progressively building on the existing skills of children.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- Parents appreciate the welcoming and caring ethos of the school. Some parents put in placing requests to the school for this reason. They feel that staff know the children well and have their best interests at heart. This has encouraged some parents and grandparents to regularly volunteer their services to work with the school.
- Parents whose children attend it have a very positive reaction to the Rainbow Base provision. They can see a very positive impact on children who are placed there.
- Most parents feel that the school communicates very effectively with them. The school uses a range of methods including an electronic 'classroom', stickers, newsletters, parent events and text messages. Parents appreciate organised opportunities to come into the school such as the 'come and play' initiative which gives them a better idea of what children are learning in school and how it is organised.
- Parents feel that they are effectively consulted and have a number of ways in which they can share their views. There is an active Parent Council which works hard to fundraise and apply for grants to provide subsidies for more expensive school activities or purchase items such as outdoor equipment and buildings for the use of staff and children.
- Parents also appreciate the adult access to education courses which are run onsite by a local college. These include work related qualifications as well as courses on parenting skills. The school is currently considering approaches to further enhance family learning.
- The school is planning to use some of its allocation from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to improve parental engagement in the life of the school, specifically family learning.

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

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

- According to responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most children agree that they feel safe at school. Most children agree that the school is helping them to become confident and almost all that they are being taught to lead a healthy lifestyle. Almost all children agree that the school listens to their views and most agree that the school takes their views into account.
- Positive relationships are a very strong feature of the school which help create a safe, nurturing environment in which children are respected, listened to and valued. High levels of positive behaviour, engagement in learning and respectful relationships are recognised through whole school and class based reward schemes which reflect the high standards expected of and achieved by children. Children are listened to and are confident to approach adults in school, as well as relevant visiting specialists, with their worries or concerns.
- The current vision and values reflect an understanding of the central role of wellbeing in supporting children to learn and achieve. This is reflected in school improvement plans and the broad range of health promoting activities in place throughout the school. Staff understand well the unique needs of each child and factors which impact on their readiness to learn and achieve. Some evidence of positive improvement is observed and anecdotally reported by staff as a result of interventions such as Nurture, PATHs and the Fizzy programme. This includes for example building children's self-esteem and improving fine motor skills and coordination. In focus groups children describe situations where they apply PATHs strategies in response to challenging situations. They also describe their growing confidence in practical food skills as a result of frequent opportunities to prepare and cook food.
- The school works closely with a number of partner agencies, making good use of intelligence provided by these partners to identify gaps in the support for children's mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Active Schools deliver greater choice of physical activities at lunchtime and after school resulting an increase to over 82% of children participating. Sports festivals and events are well attended and contribute to the development of social skills for many children. Children feel a real sense of belonging and are proud to represent their school at these events. It is commendable that the school is supported so well with a high number of volunteers from the local community, resulting in a Silver Sport Scotland Award.
- All staff are familiar with 'Getting it right for every child' and have undertaken a whole school review using the wellbeing indicators to identify development priorities. Staff should now

more robustly evaluate the effectiveness of interventions currently deployed to support the development of children's wellbeing. Senior leaders recognise further work is required to fully embed a whole school approach to use of the wellbeing indicators to provide children with a common language to explore and discuss their wellbeing.

- Establishing and recording how well children are progressing in health and wellbeing requires development. It is important that time is made available for children to reflect on their individual progress and development, and for them to discuss their progress in health and wellbeing with their class teacher. Personal learning targets, including those in health and wellbeing, would benefit from being more specific to the individual.
- The school is gradually improving outcomes in attainment for children, particularly in relation to its local authority 'family' of schools according to data provided by the school. However, the level of attainment of children is, overall, consistently lower than local authority and national averages. Whilst the school is implementing approaches to address the assessed wellbeing and additional support needs of children, this has not yet resulted in any significant improvement in attainment levels.
- Relationships are very positive between pupils and also between them, staff, parents and other stakeholders. It is clear that this works within and between different classes, including the Rainbow Bases.
- There is a clear adherence to the principles of GIRFEC in planning for children who benefit from a single child's plan. However, this assessment and planning could be more clearly linked to the wellbeing indicators. When planning, neither short-term nor long-term targets are specific enough for impact to be appropriately tracked and measured.
- All learners are included and involved in the life of the school. There is an extremely positive inclusive ethos which includes children, staff and partner agencies. There are still a few areas which could be more inclusive, such as the involvement of children from the Rainbow Base in the pupil council.
- According to responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all children feel that staff encourage them to do their best some or all of the time. Most children agree that staff treat them fairly and with respect.
- The school's approach to inclusion is at the early stages of improving achievement and attainment for learners. The school is aware that it should be able to demonstrate that it has effective strategies in place to improve achievement and attainment for all children, including those who have additional support needs. Whilst there is data to show impact and improvement in some areas, such as nurture provision, there are other areas, such as appropriate differentiation and individualisation to meet needs within classes, where more could be done.
- The school has recently implemented a number of new approaches to meet children's needs through its Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation. These are too new to have had any measurable impact. The school has included the better engagement of parents in the work of the school as an important area to be addressed through PEF. This has the potential to improve outcomes for learners in the longer term.

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 progress in literacy and numeracy

- Data provided by the school on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels shows that across the school in literacy and numeracy the majority of children are achieving the expected levels. From lesson observations and focus groups the school data is slightly inflated. The school is aware that this data is not robust and reliable. The school has a range of data that the headteacher scrutinises on a regular basis. The local authority data, including standardised assessment data, shows that in most areas of reading and mathematics the schools results are higher than its family group.
- To support improvements in attainment in literacy and numeracy there should be a whole school focus on developing a deeper understanding of progression and national standards to ensure there are consistently high expectations across areas of literacy and numeracy. This will support consistent and appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy for all children.

Literacy and English

- Across the school children listen well to adults and are respectful during discussions to other peoples points of view. The implementation of reciprocal reading is beginning to have a positive impact on the children and they are using the strategies to support their reading. Overall, children are performing lower than expected national standards in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking is satisfactory. In P1 most children can take turns when listening and talking in a variety of contexts. The majority can hear and say rhyming words. Most can follow simple instructions. In P4 most children can listen and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way. In P7 most children show respect for the views of others and offer a view point when asked. Most children can respond to a range of questions, including literal and inferential.

Reading

- Attainment in reading is satisfactory. In P1 almost all children can read from left to right and from top to bottom. Most can hear and say the different single sounds made by letters and a few can blend sounds made by a combination of letters. In P4 the majority of children can read aloud a familiar piece of text A few can add expression and can use context clues to read and understand texts. In P7 the majority of children can read with fluency, understanding and a few with expression using appropriate language. A few children can apply with confidence a range of skills and strategies to read and understand texts

Writing

- Attainment in writing is satisfactory. In P1 most children know the sounds of lowercase letters and can write words from left to right. In P4 the majority of children are linking sentences using common conjunctives and are using punctuation in most sentences accurately. In P7 most children can link sentences using a range of conjunctions and the majority can use paragraphs to separate thoughts and ideas.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Attainment in numeracy and mathematics is weak, with children performing lower than expected national standards. Classes in the upper school have had a recent focus on improving mental mathematics. The children are at the early stages of being able to use different strategies to support their mental maths. Across the school, there is limited evidence of children having planned relevant opportunities to apply their learning in numeracy. A focus on developing numeracy and mathematics skills and giving children more opportunity to work with word problems will help to support attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measurement

- In P1 almost all children can recognise numbers to 10 and can use one to one correspondence to count a given number of objects to 10. Most children are able to give the number before and after a given number up to 10. A few can read an analogue clock. In P4 the majority of children can count forwards and backwards in 10s and 100s. In P7 almost all can add and subtract 10s, 100s and 1000s from whole numbers. The majority of children can demonstrate an understanding of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. At all levels there are gaps in children's knowledge and understanding of basic numeracy concepts.

Shape position and movement

- In P1 most children can recognise common 2D shapes and can understand simple directional language. In P4 almost all can identify and name 3D objects. A few can use mathematical language to describe the properties of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects. In P7 a few children can calculate the area of 2D shapes using square centimetres. A few are able to use mathematical language to describe an acute angle.

Information handling

- In P1 children can use their knowledge of shape, colour and size to sort and match items in a variety of different ways. In P4 and in P7 most children can use appropriate mathematical language to describe the likelihood of an event.

Overall quality of children's achievements

- The school supports children to develop their leadership skills well through several opportunities such as the eco committee, junior road safety officers, buddies for younger children, tooth brushing monitors and pupil council,. There is still scope for children to take on further leadership opportunities within the school. The pupil council has occasionally met with the parent council. This approach could be developed further by having regular joint meetings and agreeing joint points for action. The older children benefit from a residential trip with another local school, which builds on joint work on the 'divided city' topic and supports the continued development of children's self-confidence and team building skills.
- The school has a tracking system in place to track the activities and achievements both within and out with the school. The school successfully uses this to identify children who are not attending clubs and to investigate the reasons for this. The school has addressed some

of these areas by providing lunchtime clubs and by speaking to children and parents to find suitable effective solutions.

Equity for all learners

- The school has a good understanding of the socio-economic background of all the children and seeks to provide appropriate interventions to address individual children's needs. The school should continue to evaluate the impact of these strategies and resources to have a clearer focus on which interventions are having the greatest impact and plan according for the following years.

School choice of QI : 2.6 Transitions

- **Arrangements to support learners and their families**
- **Collaborative planning and delivery**
- **Continuity and progression in learning**

- The school organises effective transitions into the Rainbow Base from other educational establishments. This includes the design of a pupil passport which gives staff and others important information about what works well for each child, their learning preferences and an outline of their particular needs.
- Families and other partners are involved in designing appropriate transitions into the primary school from nurseries. This includes running a transition information afternoon for parents to give them the information which they need. Joint work is planned with nurseries to ensure as smooth a transition as possible for children.
- There is a well-established buddy approach for new children coming in to the primary school. Senior pupils are trained to be buddies and will befriend and support the new Primary 1 children.
- Enhanced transition procedures are provided on a bespoke basis for children who have particular additional support needs. These procedures are designed to ensure that the children make a smooth transition into the school and are familiar with key adults before they become full time pupils. There are also enhanced transition procedures used for children who are moving from primary into secondary school and these are similarly adapted to the needs of individual pupils. Enhanced transitions may include extra visits to the secondary school so that the learner feels comfortable in the new surroundings before making the move with their peers.
- There is a comprehensive range of transition procedures in place for children who are coming into the school, for children who are moving on to other educational establishments and for children who are moving between stages within the school. Parents have indicated their satisfaction with these procedures, in particular those who have children with additional support needs who required an enhanced transition process.
- Transition planning is not treated as an individual event but continues across the school year. The school has constructed a transition 'jobs list' across all months of the school year so that transitions are planned for and carried out as effectively as possible.
- Pupil evaluations are carried out for the transition procedures and these have been very positive. Teacher evaluations are similarly positive.
- Internal transitions between classes takes place annually and this is carefully prepared for with transition information prepared for literacy and numeracy. Along with technical information about levels achieved, comments are given about pupils. More could be done to ensure that these comments are consistent in their nature.

Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

Context

- The special provision within the school consists of four Rainbow Bases supporting a total of 27 children from across West Dunbartonshire. Rainbow Bases 1 and 2 have been in place for three years. Rainbow Base 3 has been in place for two years with rainbow Base 4 having been in the school for 6 months. All children are in Primary 1, 2 or 3 and are offered a place in one of the Rainbow Bases following assessment and recommendation from a local authority placement group. All children have a range of additional support needs with most children attending the Rainbow Base full-time. Nine children have a shared placement where they attend the Rainbow base in the morning and attend mainstream classes in the afternoon. Two of these children attend mainstream classes in St Joseph's Primary School with the other seven attending mainstream classes in their home school elsewhere in the local authority. The local authority plans to open another service in Balloch in the near future.

Leadership of change

- Senior leaders and staff have successfully established the Rainbow Bases within the school over a relatively short period of time. Despite a number of changes in staffing, including at senior leadership, children are settled well into the bases and are included well in the wider life of the school. For example, children take an active part in school events and assemblies. Senior leaders are at the early stages of developing more robust self-evaluation processes to identify what is working well in the bases, and areas of practice which could be improved upon.
- Children are given opportunities to influence their learning by expressing choice. Teachers take good account of children's interests when planning lessons. This supports children to engage more fully in their learning. The school should now develop further children's opportunities to express their voice through undertaking leadership roles, for example through representation on the pupil council.
- Staff in the Rainbow Bases are fully involved in the school's initiative to develop further play based learning as part of the school's plans for PEF. It is too early at this stage to identify the impact of any work undertaken so far.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- There is a very supportive learning environment in all of the Rainbow Bases. Relationships between children, their peers and adults are very positive and children often support each other in class. Teachers plan learning activities which are differentiated well to meet the needs of most children. As a result, in most lessons, children are motivated and engaged in their learning.
- A range of learning environments is used well to support children to develop their understanding of the local community. For example, children visit the local library to experience literacy and the local woodland is used for forest walks and learning about nature and the seasons of the year. The school should now consider how effectively these learning environments contribute to progression in children's learning.
- Staff use signing and visual cues well to communicate with children. As a result children are mostly settled in their lessons and understand what is expected of them. In the few

instances where children become distressed staff manage these situations well and as a result children usually return to task promptly.

- In a few lessons digital technology is used well to support children's learning. In the best practice observed, children are able to use whiteboards interactively and use laptops to count. This motivates them well and enhances their engagement in lessons.
- Where appropriate, teachers share learning intentions and children have opportunities to reflect on their learning and how successful they have been. Visual prompts are used well to support children to plan steps in activities and to review their progress.
- A range of assessments are used to assess, monitor and track children's progress. Assessments by specialists, including educational psychologists and speech and language therapists, support teachers well to plan lessons taking good account of children's barriers to learning. This is resulting in teachers planning well differentiated lessons which support children to be more engaged in their learning.
- The school tracks and monitors children's progress against developmental milestones and early mathematical development. These checklists support staff to record children's progress against whether children have been successful, with or without support, or whether a milestone has not yet been achieved. Children's targets are captured in their educational support plans which are reviewed regularly. The school should consider how to better track and monitor children's progress against targets which link more closely to planning for children's learning and have defined timescales.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Children's wellbeing is central to the work of the Rainbow Bases. The very positive relationships and ethos of care and support which children experience is leading to them being settled well and engaging positively in their learning. Staff know the children and their families well. Parents speak very highly of the support the school provides for their children and the positive impact this is having on their child's progress.
- Children are provided opportunities to learn valuable skills to support a healthy lifestyle. These include using the school's cookery room to prepare and make healthy snacks. Visits to local community resources such as the library are used well to teach children how to cross roads safely. Visits to the local woods are used well to support children's wellbeing through learning outdoors. In school, staff use resources such as the sensory and quiet rooms to support children to remain calm and focussed on their learning or to reduce their anxiety when they become distressed.
- Staff understand Getting it Right for Every Child and are aware of the wellbeing indicators and their importance in relation to children's development. Staff should now develop further the use of the wellbeing indicators across the work of the school, including using them more explicitly when assessing children's needs.
- All children in the Rainbow Bases are included more widely in the life of the school. They join their mainstream peers at break and lunch times, take part in school events and assemblies. Some children learn alongside their peers in mainstream classes for around a third of their school day and this supports further their inclusion in the school. The school should develop further their planning for when children from the Rainbow Bases eat lunch whilst ensuring they receive their full entitlement to education.

Raising attainment and achievement

- All children in the Rainbow Bases are working at, or towards, early level. Most can write the letters of the alphabet and use these to write their first name. A few can order words in alphabetical order and make sentences from common words printed on cards. A few more able children can write three letter words and five letter words with support. Children with more complex needs can communicate with others effectively through the use of gestures. Most children can count objects to 10 with a few being able to order numbers to 20 and match pictures with similar numbers of objects. A few can display information in simple bar graphs, order objects from smallest to largest and tell the time on a clock face to 'o'clock'. More able children can perform simple single digit additions and subtractions.
- Children's progress is evidenced in children's developmental milestones, records of mathematical development and educational support plans. The school needs now to develop further their tracking and monitoring of children's progress to provide a more simplified and clearer picture of children's progress against time. This will support staff to better identify how well children are progressing against their targets and to plan more effectively for next steps.
- Children's personal achievements are recognised through school awards and these are celebrated at school assemblies.

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.

Education Scotland

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330
E enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.education.gov.scot

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