

Summarised inspection findings

Gateside Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

28 May 2024

Key contextual information

Gateside Primary School and Early Years Class serves the rural village of Gateside and surrounding areas in North Ayrshire Council. The current roll of the school is 44 children working across two classes. The headteacher has been in post since 2007 and is also the headteacher of a nearby primary school and associated early years class. There is also a deputy headteacher who works in the school for 0.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) and is the registered manager for Gateside Early Years Class. The total teaching complement is 2.6 FTE and there is one support for learning assistant who works 0.7 FTE.

Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 6 and 7.

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

- All staff support children very effectively within a strong, caring community. They have high aspirations for children, encouraging them successfully to model and live the school values of creative, active, respectful and nurtured. Senior leaders and staff revisit the vision and values regularly with children through assemblies and in classes. Staff use children's rights to underpin their approaches and to help children learn and develop. Children have a firm understanding of their rights and how they impact on their lives.
- Across the school there is a strong culture of staff collaboration and teamwork. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are highly regarded by the school community. They provide all staff with effective and supportive leadership enabling them to promote and sustain the school vision. All staff have put children's needs firmly at the centre of their work and aim to get it right for every child.
- All children have worthwhile opportunities to develop their leadership and citizenship skills through their membership of pupil leadership groups. Children demonstrate their initiative, confidence and organisational skills successfully when leading other children in lunchtime clubs. Older children are developing their leadership skills well as part of their 'Move and Improve' training which is delivered by the Active Schools service. Children are increasingly able to discuss the skills they are developing as a result of these opportunities.
- All children are clear that they have a relevant voice in school. They share their views with confidence and know they will be acted upon. For example, children used the school 'solution' box to propose that they should access the school library during lunchtimes. Children have recently started to use the self-evaluation tool, How good is OUR school? which is providing them with a meaningful voice in shaping overall school improvement.
- Senior leaders use How good is our school? 4th Edition, and a range of surveys to gather the views of all stakeholders successfully. Senior leaders use these views to create a

well-considered school improvement plan based on identified strengths and areas for improvement. They consult parents about the use of Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) as part of Parent Council meetings. School staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. As a result, all staff are clear about the rationale behind areas for improvement and have a strong capacity for change and improvement.

- Senior leaders plan and implement school improvement strategically. Current school improvement priorities include developing children's skills for learning, life and work, supporting children's wellbeing and to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher includes plans for the use of PEF within the overall school improvement plan. This ensures that PEF raises attainment for children who are impacted by factors relating to poverty and benefits all children within the school. As a result of this cohesive approach, there is evidence of the positive impact of school improvement priorities on children's attainment and achievement.
- Senior leaders have quality assurance processes in place to review the impact of school improvement planning and review the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders observe children learning and review their written work. They provide teachers with helpful feedback about areas for improvement which teachers reflect upon thoughtfully to improve their practice. This is building consistency of approaches to high-quality learning and teaching.
- Staff work closely with a wide range of partners to improve children's experiences. They have strong links with the local community who support children well. For example, children, parents, local business partners and staff are working together to create a community garden. This active collaboration is enhancing children's experiences and making improvements to the local community.
- Staff lead and implement change working collaboratively with each other. They are currently developing new and innovative planning approaches to develop children's skills for learning, life and work progressively across the curriculum. Senior leaders identify the need to ensure that processes for planning the development of children's skills across the curriculum remain manageable. This will ensure that staff provide an appropriate balance of depth and breadth across the curriculum. Senior leaders and staff are solution focused and pro-active in looking outwards to gather examples of effective practice in this area.
- Senior leaders provide a well-planned calendar of professional learning for all staff. Staff have received useful training on a range of learning and teaching approaches including skills development, nurture principles and reading pedagogy. All staff willingly adopt leadership roles linked to school improvement planning based on their interests. They apply their professional learning well to make changes. For example, staff developed new approaches to the teaching of reading. Children are more engaged in reading and attainment is improving as a result of these approaches. Building on this success, staff are now implementing new approaches to developing children's spelling skills. This work is already having a positive impact on children's spelling.

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

- There is a very positive ethos and culture within the school. All staff provide children with a rights-based education. Children create class charters in collaboration with their teachers which they use effectively to understand how children's rights support them to learn and develop.
- All children are polite and well-behaved. Staff spend valuable time at the start of each school session to work with children on identifying positive relationships and agreeing expectations. They have a firm understanding of nurture principles and how to promote positive relationships. Children are clear about the ways they can demonstrate the school values in action. Most children follow instructions carefully, listen attentively to others and interact positively with adults and each other. On occasion, children can lose focus when they are listening for longer periods during lessons. Staff use the school's relationship policy well, which outlines agreed strategies and scripts and ensures a cohesive approach across the school.
- The local authority supports school staff to promote positive relationships through training, policies and the health and wellbeing curriculum. They focus on the key principles of meeting children's needs and keeping children safe. All staff access professional learning on nurturing principles, restorative conversations and supporting children to regulate their emotions. The local authority policy focuses on strategies which are based on agreed expectations, an understanding of boundaries and clear and consistent approaches. They also take effective account of national guidance policies.
- Almost all children are enthusiastic and eager learners. Staff undertake surveys with children to identify their readiness to learn. These surveys indicate that almost all children feel prepared for their learning. All teachers share the purpose of learning effectively with children and set steps to success with children. This helps children to be clear about what they are learning and what they need to do to be successful. Almost all children focus well on tasks and activities in pairs, groups and on individual work. They enjoy sharing their successes and achievements with their families on the school's online platform.
- All teachers provide children choice in their learning during lessons that link different areas of the curriculum as part of their skills-based pedagogy. Children create 'I wonder' questions to suggest what they would like to learn about. This motivates children well and ensures their learning is interesting and relevant. As teachers continue to develop these creative approaches, they should ensure that children receive appropriate breadth and balance over all curricular areas.
- Teachers use the outdoors effectively to provide children with opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts. They provide children with opportunities to explore a range of

loose parts. This is helping children to problem-solve and work collaboratively with others. Staff also develop well children's understanding of sustainability through outdoor learning. For example, children learn about biodiversity and migration by making seed bombs and bird feeders.

- Teachers use digital technology effectively to support and enhance children's learning. Almost all children use tablets independently to access learning. Younger children use tablets successfully to code and all children use matrix bar codes to access numeracy and literacy games. This helps to extend and consolidate their learning.
- Children at the younger stages experience an appropriate balance of adult-directed, adult-initiated and child-initiated learning as part of the school's play-based pedagogy. Teachers make effective use of resources to meet the different needs of children within multi-stage classes. They create calm and purposeful learning environments that enable children to explore and be curious.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide children with clear explanations and instructions. In almost all lessons, teachers ask questions to support children's understanding. In most lessons, teachers ask open-ended questions, encouraging children well to explain their thinking. All teachers take very effective account of the multi-stage classes. They provide learning that is set at different levels of difficulty that meets the needs of almost all learners well. Classroom assistants support children very well, providing sensitive small group or individual support. Teachers use task boards to provide children with a clear outline of what they need to do. Children follow these very independently and work purposefully on their planned learning. Staff have developed the features of the 'Gateside good lesson'. This is supporting their understanding of consistent approaches to high-quality learning and teaching.
- Teachers provide children with regular written and verbal feedback about their learning. They intervene timeously in the course of teaching to reinforce and clarify important teaching points. Teachers work with children each term to set targets in literacy, numeracy and an individual target chosen by each child. Children share their targets with their families on the school's online platform. Families describe how this supports them to be involved in their child's learning journey. Teachers should continue to revisit children's targets at regular intervals throughout each term to help children reflect further on their learning and next steps.
- Senior leaders have created an assessment calendar which outlines clearly when teachers should carry out summative assessments to measure children's progress. Teachers also plan a range of end of unit assessments in literacy and numeracy throughout the school year. It would be helpful for staff to develop a clear policy on these end of unit assessments. This will support further consistency of approaches across the school. Children have regular opportunities to peer- and self-assess their work. This helps children to know what they are doing well in their learning and what they need to improve on.
- Teachers participate in moderation activities with colleagues across the cluster. They identify Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and bundle them to create high-quality assessment tasks using the national Benchmarks. This is helping teachers to gain confidence in their professional judgements about children's attainment and have a deeper understanding of national standards. Teachers are highly reflective, they identify that moderation activities are helping them identify professional learning needs. Teachers have developed their own high-quality assessments combining different curricular areas. Senior

leaders and teachers should continue to focus on the national Benchmarks when making professional judgements about children's attainment.

- Teachers plan children's learning over the long, medium, and short-term using the experiences and outcomes of CfE. They create a useful overview of learning in literacy and numeracy detailing how they will meet the needs of children at different stages within each class. Senior leaders and teachers track all children's progress carefully. They meet three times a year to discuss children's progress and next steps, reviewing a range of assessment evidence and data. As a result, all staff know children's learning needs very well. They plan carefully for children requiring additional support or challenge with their learning and for children who are affected by socio-economic factors. They set specific, measurable next steps and evaluate children's progress frequently. This is a significant strength of the school and is helping children to overcome barriers to learning effectively.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers plan children's learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing using detailed pathways which supports them to ensure progression in these areas. Teachers plan for other curricular areas using a range of local authority and school-designed formats. Staff are proactive in ensuring that children receive a relevant curriculum that provides children with an appropriate balance of personalisation and choice in their learning. They are developing innovative approaches to skills-based learning. As teachers develop these approaches, they should ensure that children receive breadth and depth of learning across all curriculum areas. This will help children to develop their skills and knowledge progressively across all curriculum areas.
- Senior leaders and staff support children very well as they move into the school from nursery. They invite parents to open mornings, providing them with information about learning and teaching approaches and useful leaflets about how to support their child at home. As children move onto secondary school, staff recognise that children are moving from a small school to a much a bigger school. They work collaboratively with cluster schools, and Garnock Community Campus to support children to settle quickly into the next stage of their learning journey. Where required, senior leaders work collaboratively with parents and partners to provide bespoke solutions for children who require enhanced transition programmes. This ensures that there is continuity in children's learning.
- Children participate in outdoor learning experiences regularly. They describe the skills they are developing through these outdoor experiences and staff highlight that outdoor sessions reduce anxiety levels for identified children. As planned, staff should develop their outdoor learning provision to develop children's skills progressively through the curriculum. They are well-placed to take this work forward. It would be beneficial for teachers to record outdoor learning experiences within their medium-term planning.
- Children receive two hours of high-quality physical education every week. Children learn French and Spanish progressively as part of their entitlement to a 1+2 approach to modern languages. Children learn about different faiths and beliefs through the religious and moral education programme.
- The headteacher and staff plan to review the school's curriculum rationale as part of their skills-based pedagogy approaches. As planned, senior leaders should consult all stakeholders in this review to ensure that planned curriculum developments are relevant to the needs of the school community.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- School staff have very positive relationships with parents and the local community. Almost all parents feel that school staff treat their child fairly and with respect and they are helping their children to become more confident.
- Parents appreciate the regular communication they receive. They value the learning conversations they have with teachers to discuss their child's progress and the regular information that is provided about forthcoming events. Parents welcome opportunities to view their child's daily learning on the school's online platform. Parents highlight that this provides them with a useful opportunity to have an informed chat with their child about their learning.
- The well-established Parent Council meets regularly with senior leaders. A significant number of the parent body attend Parent Council meetings. Senior leaders highlight that the option of sharing these meetings online is encouraging parental participation.
- Parents support the life and work of the school successfully. Parents fundraise to subsidise the cost of school trips. More recently, they have supported the school with the installation of the community garden. Parents support children's learning by sharing their own skills and abilities. For example, parents read to children which is helping to create a reading culture. They also provide children with information about their careers such as the science, technology and engineering industries. These contributions enhance children's learning experiences.

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

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

- All staff nurture children very well. They are positive and caring, providing an inclusive learning community. Almost all children feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Children are kind and confident. They take immense joy in recognising kindness in others and nominating other children for a kindness award which is shared during assembly.
- Children understand well how their rights help them in real-life situations. They create class, school, playground and lunch charters demonstrating how their rights are exercised in school. Children understand the role of adults in helping to secure their rights clearly. Every month, children explore in greater detail a right of the month. The deputy headteacher provides children with well-planned opportunities to explore their rights in greater detail during assemblies. Children in each pupil leadership group link their actions and plans to children's rights. Staff support children to make links to their learning and children's rights through displays. Children and staff are proud of the national award the school has received for this work.
- All staff have a strong commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of children and their families. They know and value each child as an individual. Senior leaders and staff undertake regular professional learning to support children's wellbeing. They use nurturing approaches successfully to model positive relationships with children and with colleagues. Across the school, almost all children are confident and capable. They express their views respectfully and have a sense of self-worth.
- Staff support children's understanding of their own wellbeing very effectively. They carry out regular surveys to gather children's views about their wellbeing and attitudes to learning. They track children's responses in these surveys carefully and identify individual children who require support. Children complete wellbeing surveys to reflect on the wellbeing indicators. As a result, children have a firm understanding of the factors that contribute to positive wellbeing. Most children feel safe in school and almost all children know they have a trusted adult to talk to if they feel worried or upset. Staff provide children with daily emotional check-ins, if required, which support children well to regulate their feelings and be ready to learn.
- All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education every week and benefit from a range of sporting clubs and activities. For example, children participate in after-school and lunchtime sports clubs such as netball and dance. This is helping children to be fit and healthy. Most children understand the importance of food as fuel to support their physical development. They recognise that too much sugar can have an impact on their physical wellbeing and oral health.

- Staff provide children with a progressive health and wellbeing curriculum covering physical health, social and emotional health, mental health and, relationships and sexual health and wellbeing. This is helping children to understand how to keep themselves healthy as they grow and develop. Partnership working is supporting children's understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, the community police provide children with advice on how to keep themselves safe when using social media.
- Children have a strong understanding of sustainability and are responsible citizens within their local community. Children worked successfully with the headteacher to provide their suggestions about designs for the school community garden. They demonstrated their confidence in tackling difficult community issues by creating a campaign to reduce the amount of dog waste in the local area. Children understand the needs of others well. For example, children in the Fairtrade group suggested a charity to receive the monies raised during a cake sale.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the school.
- All staff have a strong understanding of their statutory duties in order to keep children safe. They all engage in annual updates on the mandatory child protection training. Senior leaders provide staff with regular training sessions which focus on different aspects of statutory requirements and national codes of practice. They provide staff with more detailed information about children's wellbeing when required and ensure children's dignity and confidentiality around particular circumstances. Almost all children agree that the school deals well with bullying incidents or have never experienced bullying. There have been no incidences of bullying this session.
- Senior leaders and staff have robust systems to identify and address children's barriers to learning. This includes systems to support children who may be impacted by socio-economic factors. This is a significant strength of the school. Staff plan and review targets every term for children requiring additional support with their learning or wellbeing. Staff work with parents and partners to ensure there is a 'team around the child' approach. As a result of this robust approach, most children who require additional support make good progress in their learning.
- Children learn about aspects of discrimination and diversity through the planned health and wellbeing programme, the religious and moral education programme and within the curriculum. For example, older children wrote biographies about significant historical people during Black History Month. They also participate in specific themed weeks and explore diversity during assemblies. Children have a secure understanding of different people, beliefs and cultures. Staff should continue to seek opportunities to support children to gain an understanding of different beliefs, cultures and about people with protected characteristics. This will help children further to celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Gateside school has small numbers of children at each stage. Therefore, levels of attainment are expressed as overall statements rather than for specific stages or CfE levels.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Across the school, almost all children achieve expected levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children exceed expected levels of attainment.
- Staff identify children who require additional support with their learning promptly and address their needs carefully. This is a major strength of the school. Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make very good progress in literacy.

Listening and talking

- At the younger stages, almost all children take turns appropriately when listening and talking to others. They recount stories and events in a logical sequence. Almost all children at the middle and upper stages listen and respond appropriately to others during discussions. They communicate clearly and audibly using a range of age-appropriate vocabulary. They enjoy sharing their learning when delivering oral presentations to others.

Reading

- Across the school, children have regular access to an attractive library, including at lunchtime, where they can select from a wide range of books and reading materials. This is increasing children's motivation to read.
- At the younger stages, teachers use well-embedded approaches to develop almost all children's understanding of the sounds of words and letters well. Children use their knowledge of these sounds to read new words, including everyday words, which they refer to as 'heart' words. Almost all children at the middle and upper stages discuss their favourite authors and can identify different genres. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts but are less confident in describing the features of non-fiction texts. Almost all children at the middle and upper stages read aloud fluently according to their age and stage.

Writing

- Almost all children at the younger stages write lowercase letters legibly. They write simple sentences using a capital letter and a full stop. They would benefit from more opportunities to write independently during play experiences. Almost all children at the middle stages increasingly use their knowledge of taught spelling strategies successfully in their writing. They

should be encouraged to write at greater length and to write legibly at all times. At the upper stages, almost all children are developing well their understanding of different genre. Children would benefit from more opportunities to create non-fiction texts.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children apply their numeracy and mathematics skills across the curriculum.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all younger children are developing their understanding of number very well. Most children can count on and back successfully from numbers up to 30. Children add and subtract mentally within 10 with great confidence. They recite the days of the week but are less confident reciting the months of the year. Children at the middle and upper stages have a solid understanding of place value. They would benefit from regular revision of multiplication and division. Children at the upper stages use rulers and protractors accurately. They would benefit from further opportunities to measure units of weight and volume in practical tasks.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all younger children identify two-dimensional shapes successfully. They can complete simple symmetrical pictures, although they would benefit from revision of this concept. Almost all children at the middle and upper stages recognise and describe accurately the properties of a wide range of three-dimensional objects. They have a clear understanding of angles appropriate to their age and stage.

Information handling

- Almost all younger children record and sort information on simple charts. For example, they sort information into Carroll and Venn diagrams. Almost all children at the middle stages interpret information from bar graphs accurately. They know a bar graph should have a title and an x and y axis. Almost all older children are confident in using graphs, pie charts and data bases to sort and interpret information.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has detailed data about children's levels of attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing dating back several years. This includes relevant data about specific groups and cohorts of children and socio-economic factors that may impact on children's attainment. Staff maintain a strong focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. Children maintain high standards of attainment over time which are above or in line with local authority averages.
- Senior leaders and teachers discuss and analyse standardised assessment information to support their professional judgements. They track and monitor children's attainment robustly. This, along with regular moderation activities, is supporting teachers well to make accurate judgements about children's attainment. As planned, staff should track children's attainment across other curricular areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are shared and celebrated frequently in assemblies, social media and on the school's online platform. Children share their achievements from out of school on displays. They enjoy receiving certificates for these achievements. This is building children's confidence well and encouraging them to try new things.
- All children have a wide range of leadership opportunities through their pupil voice committees. For example, children are members of the pupil council, rights respecting

steering group, eco committee, activators, junior road safety officers, Fairtrade, house captains and buddies. This enables children to be effective contributors and develop their organisational, leadership and creative skills well.

- Children contribute effectively to the local community. For example, they undertake community litter picks. These activities support children very well to be confident individuals and realise their actions can make a difference to others.
- Children are developing their performance skills successfully through participation in school shows, choir recitals, the village Burns Supper and singing at the local community centre. They enjoy developing their sporting and teamwork skills in after school and lunchtime clubs.
- Staff track children's achievements, and their participation in school sporting clubs is tracked to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have thorough systems to monitor children's attendance, they are vigilant in addressing concerns when a child's attendance falls. Attendance levels across the school are above national levels.
- The headteacher uses PEF well to plan targeted interventions to support children with identified gaps in learning and to deliver universal support for all children. She consults the Parent Council on the use of PEF whilst being discrete about sharing children's information within a small school. Senior leaders and staff review a range of data effectively to measure the impact of PEF on gaps in children's learning and attainment. There is evidence that the use of PEF is closing identified gaps and raising attainment for all.

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.