

# Summarised inspection findings

**Dykehead Primary School**

North Lanarkshire Council

29 April 2025

## Key contextual information

Dykehead Primary School is a non-denominational primary school situated in the town of Shotts, North Lanarkshire. The school roll is 268 children split across 11 classes. Thirty-one per cent of children live in 20% Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 and 2. Thirty-three per cent of children require additional support in their learning. The headteacher is supported by 2 principal teachers. Approximately 50% of teaching staff are on non-permanent contracts.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Relationships across the school are very positive and reflect the school's vision, values and aims well. The whole school community has a good understanding of the school values of respect, honesty, ambition, independence, responsibility and confidence. Children throughout the school are articulate, friendly and well-mannered. They talk confidently about how the school values impact positively on their lives. All staff know each individual child and their families well. They demonstrate a commitment to promoting children's rights through their interactions with children, which take good account of each child's needs. This helps children to feel valued members of their school community. Class Charters and an effective 'House' system ensures children are involved in and contributing to the culture of respect and responsibility.
- Almost all children behave well at all times. In the few instances where children become distressed or dysregulated staff work together very well to implement consistent and effective strategies to reengage them in their learning.
- All children contribute to the wider life of the school through participating in a number of pupil-led groups. For example, all children were involved in the creation of 'What makes a good lesson at Dykehead'. Pupil leadership groups carry out learning visits and contribute their views about learning and teaching using this as criteria. Staff use this feedback to support ongoing improvement.
- Teachers use praise effectively to encourage and support children's learning. Most children are active, eager participants who engage well in their learning and interact well during activities. Children enjoy the opportunities they have to work independently, in pairs and in groups. They would benefit from more opportunities to work collaboratively on tasks, ensuring they can explain their thinking and the strategies they use in their learning.
- Staff make good use of the school's outdoor spaces, newly added outdoor classroom and nearby parks to enhance children's learning. Teachers should continue to develop pathways to support children's learning outdoors to build progressively on what they can already do. Children take part in a number of focused themed weeks. For example, maths week alongside

using the cooking area to develop skills for learning life and work. These help children to apply their learning in different contexts and develop their skills for learning, life and work. Teacher professional learning around mindset, emotions, active learning and play pedagogy are impacting positively in the school environment. Teachers have developed a range of spaces around the school to support the development of children's wellbeing. The majority of children talk positively about how this supports their learning.

- In most lessons, teachers explain the purpose of learning and support children well to understand how they will be successful. For example, through the use of 'Steps for Success'. In most lessons, teachers make very good links to prior learning. They use questioning well to check children's understanding and are beginning to extend this to develop children's higher order thinking skills. Teachers should continue to develop their questioning to provide increased opportunities for children to talk about their learning and provide supporting detail for their answers. For example, older children accurately answer mental maths questions but currently require support to explain the strategies they have used. In most lessons, the pace of learning should be brisker. Teachers should continue to develop their approaches to learning and teaching to ensure children's learning offers increased pace and challenge.
- Children at the early stages have opportunities to learn through play. Teachers engage with professional learning to support them to develop play pedagogy. They have created an inviting environment, which supports children to engage well in their learning. Staff refresh play areas regularly to support children to be creative and curious. Teachers should continue to engage with professional learning and review their approaches regularly. Teachers need to continue to build on the positive start to learning through play.
- Teachers are keen to share their practice with each other, such as approaches to teaching numeracy and mathematics. This is helping them to improve the quality of learning experiences for children, particularly in numeracy and mathematics. The headteacher supports staff well to develop frameworks and guidance, which are beginning to improve the consistency and quality of learning and teaching across other curricular areas. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to refresh the current learning and teaching policy to ensure that it sets out clearly the pedagogy expected across the school. This should help teachers provide, more consistently high-quality learning and teaching across the curriculum.
- Children have the opportunity to self and peer assess their learning, most notably in numeracy. Teachers provide effective written feedback in jotters and verbal feedback during lessons. Staff should now provide children with more frequent written feedback to help improve their writing.
- In most classes teachers use digital technology well to engage and support children's learning experiences. A few children are offered opportunities to develop coding skills which they enjoy. Teachers use online platforms effectively to share learning and direct children to appropriate websites. Children who require support with their learning use computer applications and software to enable them to access the curriculum. Most children show confidence and independence when using devices. For example, younger children are encouraged to use devices to challenge their number facts and operations. Teachers should continue to use progression pathways to provide children opportunities to develop a wider range of digital skills across the curriculum.
- The school's assessment timeline ensures children's progress is checked regularly throughout the school year. An initial baseline assessment at the start of each year helps teachers to plan learning, which builds on children's prior knowledge. Teachers use a variety of assessments in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to support them to understand children's progress. They maintain individual assessment folders for each child. This supports them well to gather a

body of evidence showing each child's progress. Teachers are at the early stages of using the school's newly refreshed tracking tool. The headteacher meets class teachers termly to discuss children's attainment. This supports them well to identify children who require additional support in their learning. The headteacher should continue to develop teachers' skills and abilities in analysing data to support them to plan learning, which provides children with increased levels of challenge. Teachers need to develop their approaches to assessment further to ensure assessment is integral to planned learning and teaching. This should include all areas of the curriculum. Teachers engage with colleagues across the school cluster in a range of moderation activities. This is helping them to develop their understanding of national standards. Senior leaders should continue to ensure teacher's gather accurate data on children's progress. They now need to monitor the pace of learning through the curriculum more effectively, in particular in reading and in writing.

- Teachers plan learning collegiately with stage partners termly. This supports them well to plan learning to promote progression in children's learning. They use the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence to plan literacy and numeracy throughout the school year across the four contexts for learning. They plan for all other curricular areas within the context of learning, which uses links across different subjects. Teachers teach some curricular content discretely, in instances where learning which uses links across different subjects does not support its delivery. Teachers adapt their plans in response to how well children engage with a particular context. This helps ensure learning motivates and engages most learners. Teachers use individual plans well to plan learning, which supports children who require additional support to access their learning. Teachers should now include individual targets in these plans. This would help them to track and monitor these children's progress more effectively.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

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

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Attainment is stronger in numeracy than literacy.
- Most children across the school attain expected levels of attainment in numeracy. Most children at early and first level attain expected levels in reading. The majority of children at the early level achieve expected levels in reading. The majority of children across the school achieve expected levels in writing and talking and listening. A few children are capable of achieving more in their learning. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress in their learning.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in literacy and English.

#### Listening and talking

- Across the school, the majority of children are confident and articulate when expressing their views. At early level, the majority of children listen well to instructions and are beginning to listen to each other. At first level, the majority of children listen and respond appropriately to each other. At second level, the majority of children are beginning to recognise and use nonverbal features of good listening and talking. Across the school, children would benefit from developing their listening and talking skills to build progressively on what they can already do.

#### Reading

- At early level, most children enjoy being read to by staff. Most children know single sounds but are not yet confident blending sounds. The majority of children should be developing phonics and early reading skills at a faster pace. At first level, most children are becoming fluent readers and answer questions accurately about a text. A few children who find reading challenging would benefit from using simpler texts to help improve their fluency. At second level, most children identify the main idea in a text. They would benefit from more practise answering evaluative and inferential questions.

#### Writing

- The majority of children at early level write a sentence using capital letters and full stops. Children working towards the early level need to be given more frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills. At first level, the majority of children identify the features of writing in different genres, such as recounts. Children are not yet secure in spelling common words or in using spelling rules to attempt to write unfamiliar words. At second level, the majority of children write across a variety of genres and for different purposes. Children at all stages need to write more regularly and at length. This will support children to write more detailed texts

across a range of genres, using key features to enhance their writing. The quality of presentation of literacy work across the school is not yet of a consistently high standard.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to use and apply their learning in real life contexts across the curriculum.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, most children are working well with numbers to 20. They name the days of the week and months of the year in sequence and recognise coins to £2. Children at first level read, write, order and recite numbers to 1000 accurately. Almost all children perform a variety of calculations, including addition and subtractions using three-digit numbers. At second level, most children are confident in identifying and using numbers with two decimal places. They are confident in comparing fractions, percentages and decimals. They need to develop their skills further in calculating the volume of three-dimensional (3D) objects.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, most children are developing their skills in identifying and naming simple shapes. Almost all children confidently create and continue patterns using two-dimensional (2D) shapes. Most children at first level, name and identify a range of common 2D shapes and 3D objects successfully. They are not yet confident in using mathematical language to describe the properties of shapes and objects. At second level, most children demonstrate and explain their understanding of angles, classifying them using the appropriate mathematical vocabulary.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children use their knowledge of colour, shape and size to match and sort items in different ways. Almost all children at first level, answer simple questions to extract key information from data sets effectively. They need to develop their skills further in gathering, sorting and displaying data using a variety of different ways. At second level, children are developing the ability to extract, analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a variety of data. Children at first and second level would benefit from further opportunities to explore uncertainty and chance.

### **Attainment over time**

- Most children across the school have increased their attainment in literacy and numeracy over the last three years, Senior leaders track the attainment of cohorts of children over time. They identify trends and understand the reasons for variations at different stages. Senior leaders and staff measure the impact of interventions for those children who require additional support in their learning effectively.
- In recent years, the school's attendance rates have remained below national averages and local authority averages. In 2022/23 overall attendance at the school was 91%, which is below the local authority average. Senior leaders, staff and the family support worker focus on improving children's attendance. This includes working with partner agencies, signposting support services, building relationships with parents, providing pastoral support and targeted interventions. Their approaches are having a positive impact on the attendance of individual children and the overall attendance rate. A few children struggle to attend school regularly and currently attend on a part-time basis. They attend school every day for a part of each day. This decision has been taken in consultation with parents, the local authority and partner agencies. The headteacher and staff, including the family support worker, are working well with a range



of partners to develop strategies to meet these children's needs better. They are supported when not in school through the local authority's virtual school.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children are proud of their achievements in and out of school which are celebrated at assemblies and on displays. Parents are encouraged to share achievements from home with the school. This helps children to identify their strengths and recognise their successes. Senior leaders record children's participation in school clubs and wider activities. This enables them to identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out.
- Staff, parents and partners offer children a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs in areas such as sports, dance, art and chess. Children develop their teamwork and communication skills well through participation in these activities. Most older children speak knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their leadership responsibilities and their role in school improvement. Fulfilling these responsibilities develops their confidence and sense of ownership of their school.
- Children should now be supported to develop a better understanding of the skills they are developing through their participation in their wider achievement activities.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Almost all staff have a very clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. They have a robust knowledge of the challenges facing children and families and are proactive in their efforts to provide sensitive and practical support. Staff take good account of the cost of the school day. They have taken steps to reduce or negate costs associated with school activities. For example, children have benefited from recycling school uniforms. The school's approaches are supporting equity of opportunity.
- Senior leaders have allocated Pupil Equity Funding effectively to provide additional teaching staff and a family support worker. Staff deliver a range of appropriate targeted literacy and numeracy interventions. These are having a positive impact on a few children's levels of engagement in their learning. Senior leaders track the progress of individual children who are involved in these interventions carefully. They should now use attainment data more effectively to help them to identify more clearly the extent to which they are closing the poverty related attainment gap across the school.



## Other relevant evidence

- Children receive their entitlement to two hours of physical education per week.
- Children are developing their skills in French and Spanish in line with the 1 + 2 language programme.

## 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.