

Summarised inspection findings

Knoxland Primary School

West Dunbartonshire Council

28 November 2023

Key contextual information

Knoxland Primary School serves the communities of Dumbarton East, Barnhill, Milton and parts of Silverton and High Overton. The primary school currently has a roll of 335 children organised across 14 classes.

The headteacher has been in post since 2017 and is supported by two depute headteachers and two principal teachers. The two principal teachers are currently sharing one full time equivalent acting depute headteacher post.

At the time of the inspection, most children at Knoxland Primary school lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 3 to 10.

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 children 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

- Staff have created a welcoming, positive, and nurturing environment for children. Relationships between staff and children are strong. Staff know children and families well and foster a culture which reflects the school's values and motto 'Be kind, Be respectful, Be the best you can be'. Children are friendly, kind and courteous to staff, visitors and one another. They enjoy being in their school and feel valued by all members of staff. Most children engage well in their learning in most lessons. They are motivated and eager to learn.
- Across the school children work well together in pairs, small groups and as a whole class. The whole school approach to working with talking partners provides a consistency of development of listening and talking skills across the school. Most children respond positively to this approach enabling them to discuss their learning well. Staff should plan more opportunities for children to learn independently.
- In the majority of lessons children use digital technology well, for example, to support literacy and numeracy learning activities. Children and staff use interactive whiteboards effectively to extend learning. There is a need to develop a more progressive approach to developing digital skills across the school. This will support children to use digital technologies more creatively across the curriculum to deepen and enrich their learning. In most lessons teachers share the purpose of lessons and support children well to understand how to be successful in their learning. In a few lessons children co create success criteria. This should be developed further across the school to help children to be clear about the purpose of their learning.
- In most lessons instructions and explanations are clear. In a minority of classes, teachers use questioning well to extend children's learning or support them to develop higher order thinking skills. Teachers should now develop the effective use of questioning further. In most lessons teachers provide timely verbal feedback on children's learning. Where this is most effective, it

helps children understand what they have done well and provides clear next steps. Teachers provide children with clear targets to improve their writing skills.

- Children's experiences are enhanced through well considered learning environments that support the development of creativity, research and investigation. Children are beginning to lead their own learning, self-directed by interest and curiosity. Most classes have regular opportunities to learn outdoors. As planned, staff should continue to incorporate the views and interests of children in developing their learning environment further.
- Teachers at the early stages work together well to develop their approach to learning through play. Staff have engaged well with national practice guidance and consider this when planning experiences for children. As planned, staff should continue to plan spaces, experiences and interactions which provide challenge for all children and build on their prior learning.
- Staff make effective use of an agreed assessment calendar which includes a range of formative and summative assessment activities. Children across the school engage regularly in peer and self-assessment activities. As a result, they can identify what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Staff use standardised assessments and digital programmes successfully to identify gaps in children's learning and plan targeted interventions. Staff should now develop further high-quality assessments, which enable children to demonstrate breadth, challenge and application of learning across the curriculum.
- All teachers plan learning experiences collaboratively with their stage partner, leading to consistent standards of planning across the school. They have begun to use a new streamlined, digital approach to planning which supports well transition and moderation activities. Teachers plan appropriately over different timescales to meet the needs of all children, including those who require additional support for learning. Where appropriate, individualised plans and learning targets are in place for identified children. Teachers make effective use of local authority progression pathways, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to inform their planning. As a result, the majority of children experience learning that is set at an appropriate pace and level of challenge. Teachers should increase the involvement of children in planning.
- Teachers meet with senior leaders three times a year to review children's progress and identify children at risk of under-achieving. They are becoming increasingly confident in using a range of data to support this professional dialogue. Teachers make effective use of a robust tracker, making regular adjustments informed by the ongoing assessment of children's progress. They monitor closely children who require additional support for learning and those affected by poverty. As a next step, senior leaders should develop further approaches to tracking to include all curriculum areas.
- Most teachers feel that moderation activities help them make sound judgements about children's progress, particularly in relation to writing. Their regular involvement in professional dialogue around assessment outcomes ensures that their judgements are becoming increasingly reliable. Teachers would now benefit from re-engaging in moderation activities with staff from other schools.

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.

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all children. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate children's 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 children's achievement
- equity for all children

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children attain expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy.
- The majority of children who are living in families facing financial hardship achieve expected national standards in reading and numeracy. Girls are out-performing boys across literacy and numeracy, in particular in writing at second level.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children make good progress on prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Overall, children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in listening and talking. Across all stages, children benefit from regular opportunities to work with a 'talking partner'. This supports them to develop and apply verbal and non-verbal skills when engaging with others in a variety of contexts. Most children, listen to and follow instructions well. At early level, children hear and say the different sounds made by letters. They participate actively in songs and rhymes. A few children make an attempt to take turns when listening and talking within a group. At first level, most children ask and respond to different types of questions to show understanding of the main ideas of spoken texts. By second level, most children build on the contribution of others effectively by clarifying points or supporting others' opinions or ideas. Children at first and second level would benefit from developing further their note-taking skills.

Reading

- Overall, children are making very good progress on prior levels of attainment in reading. At early level, most children contribute to discussions about events, characters and ideas relevant to the text. They read aloud familiar texts with attention to simple punctuation. At first level, most children answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions about a text. They explain their preference for particular texts and authors. At second level, most children identify the purpose of a text with suitable explanation. At first and second level, children should develop further their ability to read with expression, using appropriate pace and tone. They should expand the range of sources used to find, select, sort and use information for a specific purpose.
- Children have access to 'Starbook' library areas across the school to further their personal reading. Senior leaders should engage children in developing further these library areas to support them to read for enjoyment.

Writing

- Overall, children are making good progress in writing from prior levels of attainment. At early level, children write to reflect their own experiences and feelings using appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning. They make an attempt to spell familiar words correctly. Children should continue to explore further patterns and sounds in a range of play and imaginative contexts. They should continue to develop their ability to form most lowercase letters legibly. At first level, children create a variety of texts for different purposes. They can write independently, using appropriate punctuation and link sentences in a way that makes sense. By second level, children use persuasive writing skills to influence the reader, such as emotive language. Across all levels the presentation of writing is good. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to present their text digitally.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children make good progress on prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, almost all children have a positive attitude to and enjoy learning in numeracy and mathematics. Most children at the early level can work confidently with numbers to 20 and beyond. They have a good understanding of time, sequencing days of the week and months of the year accurately. At first level children can round numbers to the nearest 10 or 100. Almost all children can solve addition and subtraction problems with three-digit numbers. At second level, most children show a good awareness of the link between fractions, decimals and percentages. They are less confident when discussing area and using correct mathematical terms. Across all levels children should be encouraged to become more confident in sharing their ideas and strategies to solving number problems.

Shape, position and movement

At early level, most children recognise successfully common, two-dimensional shapes, sort them and identify the number of sides. At first level, children were able to identify the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and those that tessellate individually or together. At second level children can complete symmetrical patterns with two lines of symmetry.

Information handling

- At first level, children collate information using tally marks and frequency tables. They review and improve the suitability of the data collection for a given task. At second level, children discuss the reliability of data well and identify accurately the features of bar graphs. At first and second level children should continue to develop a variety of different methods, including the use of digital technologies, to display data. Children at early level would now benefit from more opportunities to gather, organise and display information in different ways.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have robust systems in place to track children's progress over time in reading, writing and numeracy. They use this data well to monitor the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve outcomes for children and to track progress over time. As a result, staff have a strong understanding of children's progress and attainment. Building on this positive practice, senior leaders should now extend this tracking to include other areas of the curriculum.
- Staff correctly identified the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. The introduction of whole school approaches to raising attainment in literacy is enabling children to make very good progress. Children develop, reinforce and apply a range of literacy skills across different curriculum areas. In reading, children at first and second level have overtaken their pre-pandemic levels. A sustained focus on the development of writing, post pandemic, is leading to accelerated progress from prior

levels. Staff should sustain this focus to enable children to return to and overtake pre-pandemic levels. In numeracy, children at almost all stages have made sustained progress since the pandemic. Staff's identification of specific gaps in learning, followed by targeted interventions is effectively supporting children make better progress.

Overall quality of children' achievements

- Children have increasing opportunities to contribute to the life and ethos of the school through a range of groups, responsibilities, sporting events, committees and fundraising activities. This is supporting children to develop their skills as leaders. Children know that their opinions are valued and acted upon. Children would like to be more involved in the local community, for example, more visits to the local library.
- Children like when staff celebrate their achievements within and outwith school. Staff are committed to celebrating the successes of all children which helps create an ethos of achievement, in an inclusive community. Children are proud of their achievements and look forward to celebrating these through weekly assemblies and the online class apps. Senior leaders are beginning to track which children have achieved. This helps them to identify which children are missing out so they can encourage participation in extra-curricular activities in school and the wider community. Senior leaders and staff also provide children with opportunities for wider achievement through the curriculum, for example through an interdisciplinary learning project to organise a whole school sporting event. Teachers now need to support children to identify the skills they are developing through their achievements and how they could apply these skills across their learning in school and beyond.

Equity for all children

- Senior leaders and teachers regularly monitor the progress of identified groups and individuals. This includes those who require additional support for learning, those who are care experienced, those to whom English is an additional language and children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing due to their socio-economic circumstances. Senior leaders use additional Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) appropriately to provide pupil and family support workers to provide focused support to children with significantly lower attendance. This is showing early signs of improving attendance for targeted pupils. PEF is used to fund dedicated staff and resources to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. The use of enhanced staffing is beginning to support children to improve and sustain attainment. Senior leaders cannot yet clearly evidence the extent to which the school is accelerating progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap. They should continue to support teachers to use data to effectively identify the attainment gaps and monitor progress towards closing these gaps. This should help them to identify how the impact of interventions is raising attainment for all children, including those facing financial hardship.
- Senior leaders and staff have a good understanding of the socio-economic context and the specific needs of the children in their care. They build strong relationships across the community and support children and families with discretion and sensitivity. This includes subsidising school trips and offering a pre-loved uniform bank.

Other relevant evidence

- The Parent Council is consulted on the school plans to spend the PEF allocation. However, stakeholder involvement has not yet been extended to the children.
- The school is providing children with two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- 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. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food in schools.

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.