Summarised inspection findings

St Margaret's Primary School

Renfrewshire Council

28 November 2023

Key contextual information

St Margaret's Primary School is situated in the centre of Johnstone town. It is a Roman Catholic denominational school. Children attend the school from Johnstone town centre and the neighbouring village of Kilbarchan. In September 2022, the majority of children lived in deciles one and two of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The school roll is 170 children. They are organised over seven classes. In P1 to P3, children experience a combination of direct teaching and free-flow play across three playrooms. The headteacher has been in post since 2009. She is supported by a deputy headteacher and a principal teacher.

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	

■ Across the school community, all staff interactions with children are warm, caring and nurturing. As a result, children feel welcome and cared for in a very positive, inclusive environment. The school's Gospel values are reflected in the relationship between staff and children. Children speak confidently about their school motto and demonstrate this in their interactions. This positive ethos underpins the life of the school.

■ Most children play an active role in the school, parish, and wider community. Children contribute to the life of the school through a variety of roles. These include House Captains, Vice Captains, being members of the 'SHANARRI Clan', 'Page Turner Reading Group' and Eco Group. These children are developing important skills including problem-solving, decision-making, collaboration and public speaking.

■ Almost all children are eager to learn, engaged and motivated. Staff provide children with experiences that are enjoyable and matched to their interests and local context. For example, children have enjoyed positive learning experiences through science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This is also supporting their understanding of the world of work.

■ Children work well independently, in pairs and in groups. Children are involved in planning aspects of inter-disciplinary learning and play. Teachers should develop further children's involvement in planning across all areas of the curriculum.

■ All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. In all lessons, teachers link work to children's prior learning. In most lessons, the intended learning is shared with children. However, this needs to be less task based and more focused on planned learning. Children should be provided with more opportunities to contribute to the creation of criteria for success.

- Across the school most teachers make appropriate use of digital technology to enhance teaching and learning. Children use a range of digital technologies across the curriculum to share their learning.

- Teachers use different methods to check children's understanding during learning. Most teachers use questioning well to help children explore their learning and explain their understanding. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to questioning to help children develop higher order thinking skills.

- Children in P1 to P3 learn through a play-based approach. Teachers plan effectively for quality interactions, spaces and experiences. Children can access play freely to consolidate and explore new learning. Staff should continue to evaluate the quality of learning to ensure that the play approaches offer appropriate challenge and progression across the curriculum for all children. This will ensure that all children have opportunities to apply skills learned particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teachers and nursery practitioners should now identify more opportunities to work closely together. This would help ensure continuity in learning and a more consistent approach to pedagogy across nursery and P1 to P3.

- Teachers make effective use of peer and self-assessment strategies to support children to better understand their learning. They provide helpful oral and written feedback to children. Across P4 to P7 written feedback is most effective when teachers focus on children's strengths and then provide explicit guidance on what they can do to improve their learning.

- Teachers use a range of formative, summative and standardised assessments effectively to monitor children's progress and identify next steps in their learning. Most teachers provide appropriate activities that meet the needs of the majority of children. Teachers should continue to develop learning activities that meet the needs of all children, including the most able.

- There are clear learning pathways in place for literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, religious education in Roman Catholic schools, and physical education. When planning, teachers make reference to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes, and benchmarks. Staff now need to ensure that they use progression pathways across all curriculum areas.

- Senior leaders use a whole school tracking system to monitor children's attainment in numeracy and literacy. They use this well to support discussion about the progress of learners and identify who needs extra support. Teachers then provide effective interventions for children who require additional support with their learning. Teachers use wall displays to show children's learning. Staff should continue to develop their approaches to monitoring and tracking individual children's attainment.

- Teachers have engaged in moderation activities to support their professional judgements about children's levels of attainment. Senior leaders have correctly identified that teachers should engage in moderation activities further to improve consistency in professional judgements. This will further develop their understanding of national attainment standards. This is particularly important at P1 to P3 to ensure that information on children's attainment and progress is more reliable.

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
■ Most children attained expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy at P4 and P7 in 2022/23. Senior leaders should ensure approaches to assessing children's literacy and numeracy attainment in P1 are more robust.

■ Most children living in areas of deprivation, or with additional support needs, are on track to attain expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Those not on track are known to staff and supported well to make progress in their learning.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children make good progress in reading and writing at P4 and P7. Children at P1 are making satisfactory progress in reading and writing Children at all stages are making very good progress in listening and talking. Senior leaders and staff have worked very well to improve listening and talking as a result of the focussed improvement work on vocabulary.

Listening and talking
■ Across the school, children are friendly and enthusiastic to engage with their classmates, staff and visitors. Almost all children who have achieved the early level, can follow instructions and communicate effectively through play. At first level, most children confidently talk about opinions and share their thoughts with others. In their eagerness to participate and engage in groups, a few children at both early and first level should continue to develop skills in listening to others' contributions and in taking turns when part of group activities. At second level, children express their views effectively and communicate clearly, audibly and with expression. They were less confident on building on the ideas of others, for example, clarifying points and supporting the ideas and opinions of others.

Reading
■ Most children who have achieved early level listen and respond well to stories. They predict and answer questions appropriately. They are less confident in using sight vocabulary to read texts. At first level, most children read with increasing fluency and expression. They accurately explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction text. A few children are not yet confident in answering inferential questions. At second level, children talk enthusiastically about a range of authors. They demonstrate a range of reading skills and strategies to show understanding of texts. They are less confident discussing and recognising techniques used

to influence the reader including word choice, emotive language, repetition, and rhetorical questions. All children benefit from visits to class, school, and community libraries.

Writing

■ The majority of children who achieved early level are exploring and using sounds, letters and words to help them with their writing. Most children need more opportunities to write sentences independently. At first level, most children can discuss the key features of writing and can punctuate sentences accurately. At second level, most children have opportunities to write both short and extended texts for a range of purposes using different genre, form, structure and style. They need to use appropriate vocabulary more consistently to suit the purpose and the audience of the text. At all stages, teachers should provide children with more regular opportunities for extended writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

■ Almost all children who achieved early level count confidently up to and back from 20. They use the correct mathematical language when comparing height and size. Applying addition and subtraction skills requires further consolidation. Children need more practice in written formation of numbers. At first level, most children round numbers to 100 successfully. They accurately add and subtract three-digit numbers. They are less confident in applying their skills in multiplication and division to solve problems. At second level, most children confidently carry out money calculations using the four operations. Teachers should provide children with support in calculating the area and perimeter of regular shapes. All children at first and second level need to improve their skills and progress with fractions.

Shape, position and movement

■ Almost all children who achieved early level recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes and identify these in the environment. At first level, children know the main points of the compass and use them to provide directions. They need to consolidate their understanding and identification of right angles and the properties of shapes. At second level, children confidently identified two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects and explained their properties using the correct mathematical language.

Information handling

■ Almost all children who achieved early level collect and organise information accurately using tally marks. At first and second level, most children successfully extract key information from charts, bar graphs and tables. Children would benefit from greater opportunities to use digital technology to collect, organise and display data in real life contexts. Across the school children apply their information handling skills within a variety of contexts including STEM activities.

Attainment over time

■ Senior leaders have developed effective approaches to monitoring attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders correctly identified a decline in attainment in literacy and numeracy due to the impact of COVID-19 on attendance and learning in 2020/21. They have worked well with staff to ensure that attainment has largely recovered and in some measures improved from before 2020/21. Senior leaders have focused on improving children's

attainment in writing in recent years. This is beginning to have a positive impact on attainment, particularly at P4 and P7. Senior leaders should work with teachers to ensure there is more detailed monitoring of all children's progress at an individual level, including those who have a barrier to learning. Children are not yet experiencing or making sufficient progress across all curricular areas in the broad general education. There is a need for senior leaders to track attainment over time across all curricular areas. This will support staff to ensure that children are making progress in each area as the move through the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff value children's achievements both in and outside of school. Achievements are celebrated at assemblies, on achievement boards and more widely through the school's social media channels. Children receive 'Value Keeper' certificates and house points; these are helping to build children's confidence and self-esteem.

- Children improve their physical fitness and further develop their leadership skills through taking in a range of school clubs led by staff and partners. Children's skills for learning, life and work are developed through a range of activities including health week where links are made to local businesses. Whole school approaches to STEM result in a school exhibition and raised a greater awareness in children of career opportunities.

- Staff and children have achieved a worldwide model school award for their work on improving children's self-control, emotional awareness and building positive relationship. This achievement contributes to children's understanding of the school motto, 'To live wisely, think deeply and love generously'.

- Tracking of children's wider achievements is at an early stage. Senior leaders and staff should develop their plans to track wider achievements comprehensively so that no children are at risk of missing out. Senior Leaders should implement their plans to link wider achievements to skills children are developing through these experiences.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a very clear understanding of the socio-economic needs of children and their families. They have taken positive steps to minimise the cost of the school day. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used well to provide staffing and resources. For example, an early year's worker supports P1 to P3 and an additional teacher works with older children. The additional staffing and resources are successfully improving children's literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing. For example, staff are successfully closing the poverty related attainment gap in listening and talking at P4. Senior leaders should work to fully evidence the impact of PEF and how this is accelerating the progress of children targeted by this funding.

- Senior leaders have offered opportunities for all parents to be involved in the decision-making process relating to the spending of PEF. Currently, however, only the Parent Council have engaged in this process.

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.