

# Summarised inspection findings

East Calder Primary School

West Lothian Council

23 April 2024

## Key contextual information

East Calder Primary School is a non-denominational primary school and early learning class (ELC) situated in the town of East Calder, in West Lothian Council. The current school roll is 298 children working across 13 classes. The headteacher took up post in April 2019, the depute headteacher started in June 2019. There are 19.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff including the senior leadership team and a support for learning teacher. There are three (FTE) pupil support assistants.

A new school building is currently under construction on the existing grounds of the school. This impacts on the space available within the school grounds.

Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones 3 to 8. The school receives £46,440 of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Twenty-four percent of children require additional support with their learning. There have been no exclusions over the last three years.

East Calder Primary School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

### 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

- Children build and maintain very positive relationships, interacting respectfully and confidently with staff, visitors and each other. Staff provide children with a rights-based education and almost all children feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Children are proud of their school. They use the school values of 'learning, equity, attitude, respect and nurture' meaningfully to support their learning.
- In almost all classes, staff provide children with inclusive learning environments. Children access calm areas within classrooms independently to help them be ready to learn. Staff use an agreed positive response plan to promote positive relationships. Staff also offer children discrete one to one support to talk about their wellbeing, relationships and learning if required. The local authority supports the school to promote positive relationships in a range of ways. For example, the schools can access support from local authority officers, an additional support team, health and wellbeing champions and family liaison officers. These approaches enable children to feel valued and support positive relationships and behaviour.
- In almost all classes, teachers use digital technology very effectively to support and enhance children's learning. For example, children access learning tasks independently using matrix bar

codes, they carry out research on the internet and record their learning on electronic jotters. This is helping children to be curious and creative learners. Teachers use digital technology very well to remove barriers to learning for children who require additional support with their learning. Children at the upper stages use digital technology skilfully to gather, interpret and sort data about their classroom environment.

- Children have many valuable opportunities to contribute to the life and work of the school through participation in pupil leadership committees. Teachers refer to a helpful skills framework during lessons to discuss with children the skills they are using. Children articulate clearly the skills they are developing during their learning, such as creativity, teamwork or communication.
- Children are very eager and motivated learners. Almost all children work together extremely well in pairs, groups and as individuals on worthwhile tasks and activities. Almost all children listen attentively to teachers who provide clear explanation and instructions. In a few lessons children can become distracted when they are listening for longer periods. Staff provide children with praise and encouragement to help them focus and stay motivated.
- Teachers plan learning through play for children at the early stages. Children develop creativity and social skills well through block play and teachers capture their views and engagement in floorbooks. Teachers interact well with children to encourage them during direct teaching activities. They should continue to develop learning through play experiences which provide children with an appropriate balance of adult and child led learning.
- All teachers are highly committed to improving their teaching through using and applying educational research. This is a major strength of the school. They have created a useful four-part lesson model based on agreed teaching methods which supports consistent approaches to learning and teaching. Teachers undertake highly relevant professional enquiries to develop a chosen aspect of learning and teaching. They are enthusiastic about this work and willingly share their learning. Teachers identify that professional enquiries are improving their understanding of high-quality learning and teaching and helping children to become more engaged with their learning. They are well-placed to develop further their approaches to measuring the impact of their professional enquiries on children's attainment.
- In almost all lessons, teachers share clearly the purpose of learning and measures of success with children. In most lessons, teachers provide children with learning that is set at different levels of difficulty. They are developing highly innovative approaches to providing children with individualised levels of support and challenge using digital technology. This supports children very effectively to engage in learning experiences that are well-matched to their needs. Most teachers ask children appropriate questions to support or challenge their thinking. Almost all teachers make connections to previous learning at the start of lessons and reflect on learning with children at the end of a lesson. They support children well to use mistakes as an opportunity to move their learning forward. This helps children to be confident as they learn new concepts.
- The headteacher created a useful strategy to assess children's attainment and progress in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. Teachers consider focus areas for assessment using the national Benchmarks when planning children's learning. They use a variety of standardised and ongoing assessments effectively to determine children's progress in learning. Teachers use summative assessment data well which is supporting their professional judgements about children's attainment of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Teachers provide children with useful verbal feedback during lessons to help children understand what they are doing well. They support children to create targets in their learning

for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This session, teachers developed useful numeracy learning walls in all classes which help children to reflect on their learning in numeracy. Teachers provide children in the upper stages with useful 'in the moment' feedback using digital technology to help children see how they can improve. As planned, teachers should continue to extend their approaches to feedback and target setting.

- Teachers have a strong understanding of the moderation cycle and engage in worthwhile moderation of their planning, teaching and assessment. They share this practice with colleagues in the local cluster and nationally. These moderation activities help teachers to have confidence in their professional judgements about children's progress and set high standards for children.
- All teachers plan learning over different timescales using the experiences and outcomes of CfE. They use progressive local authority guidance and school-based programmes effectively across all curricular areas. This provides children with learning across a broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers plan learning that links different areas of the curriculum together in consultation with children. This provides children with valuable opportunities to shape their learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers track carefully children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They meet termly to discuss children's progress and attainment. Teachers have started to track children's progress in other curricular areas. This is helping them to ensure children learn progressively and build upon what they already know.
- Senior leaders and staff have detailed data on the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts of children including those affected by socio-economic factors. Senior leaders and teachers plan universal and targeted interventions for children who require additional support or challenge in their learning. They should continue to ensure they match planned learning carefully to the needs of all children who face barriers to learning. Senior leaders and teachers use a consistent 'adopt, adapt, abandon and accelerate' approach well to consider which interventions are effective in closing gaps in children's learning.

## 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

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. In session 2022-2023, most children achieved expected CfE levels of attainment in reading, writing and numeracy. Almost all children achieved expected levels of attainment in talking and listening. Across the school, there are a few children who are exceeding expected levels of attainment.
- Senior leaders use available data well to track the progress of individuals and groups of children with barriers to their learning. Almost all children make good progress against their individual targets.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.
- Children benefit from a school library which they access regularly to select personal reading. Children's use of this resource is developing their literacy skills well.

### Listening and talking

- At all stages, almost all children listen respectfully and speak well with confidence. Almost all children at early level listen carefully to stories, recalling information and responding appropriately. They participate in discussions with enthusiasm. At first level, almost all children take turns and contribute relevant ideas to group discussions. Almost all children at second level listen to and build upon the ideas and opinions of others, whilst respecting their differences.

### Reading

- Almost all children at early level read and say different sounds and letters with confidence. They use picture clues very well to make predictions and identify characters in stories. At first level, most children read aloud familiar texts with fluency and increasing expression. They discuss their reading preferences with certainty referencing the title, author, illustrator and genre. A few should be supported further to recognise the difference between fact and opinion. At second level, almost all children read confidently with expression and fluency. They can create questions, which promote higher-order thinking, and understanding of inference within a text. Children across first and second levels would benefit from being encouraged to access a wider range of authors to broaden their reading experiences.

### Writing

- Almost all children at early level use a capital letter and a full stop in a sentence accurately. They explore sounds, letters and words to help them write independently. At first level, most children punctuate sentences accurately and spell everyday words correctly. They plan and create texts using adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions effectively. At second level, most

children write regularly for a range of purposes. They use techniques to engage or influence the reader, such as persuasive language. At first and second level children should have opportunities to more regularly apply their writing skills in extended texts.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Across the school, most children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

## **Number, money and measure**

- Almost all children at early level identify confidently numbers from zero to 20 and add and subtract successfully to 10. A few children subtract accurately to 20. At first level, most children identify correctly the place value of digits in three-digit numbers. They would benefit from revision in using multiplication and division strategies. At second level, almost all children convert decimals to fractions and understand percentages. They would benefit from more practice in applying this knowledge to real-life situations, such as calculating the discounted cost of items. Children read timetables accurately to solve problems and calculate the duration of journeys.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, almost all children identify and sort simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children at first level use mathematical language to describe accurately the properties of two-dimensional shapes. Almost all children working towards second level identify correctly angles such as acute and obtuse. Children would benefit from further consolidation of their knowledge of angles.

## **Information handling**

- Most children at early level add information to pictorial displays successfully and can find out information from charts. At first level, most children understand that the purpose of graphs and charts is to organise information. They would benefit from more opportunities to gather and interpret data using charts and graphs at regular intervals throughout the year. At second level, almost all children identify confidently suitable methods for collecting and displaying information. At second level, children use creative and interesting approaches to gather and analyse data within relevant contexts such as the air quality in their classroom. They are skilled in using digital technology to record and interpret data and share their findings.

## **Attainment over time**

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy has been consistently above comparator schools, local authority and national averages at Primary 1, 4 and 7 for the last few years. Predicted data for 2023/24 shows that children's attainment continues to be raised in almost all measures.
- Senior leaders have robust systems in place to track and monitor children's attainment over time. Staff use these tracking systems effectively to identify children's progress, to determine appropriate interventions, and to support their judgements of children's attainment. Senior leaders should continue, as planned, to implement further systems to track children's progress across all curricular areas.
- Senior leaders and staff recognise gaps in children's numeracy and mathematics at certain stages. They have developed a clear strategy to raise attainment in this area through improving approaches to planning, teaching and assessing numeracy and mathematics. These approaches are raising levels of attainment in this area.

## **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- All children have regular opportunities to share their achievements from in and out of school. These are celebrated and recognised in assemblies, in classes, on a blog and in the East Calder Golden Book. Children have worked together to achieve a range of local and national

awards and accreditations, including awards for sustainability, reading and children's rights. These achievements develop children's understanding of sustainability and their literacy and citizenship skills.

- All children participate in a range of lunchtime and after school clubs. Staff track children's participation and engagement in these clubs. They identify gaps for individual children and plan for opportunities and experiences to reduce the risk of any child missing out. These clubs support children well to develop their confidence, teamwork and communication skills.
- Children participate in a range of school leadership committees and groups including hub and house groups. Children are developing their skills for learning, life and work, including leadership, as a result of their participation in these groups. Children play an active role within their school community which helps them to become responsible citizens and effective contributors.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a strong understanding of the context of the school and the barriers to learning faced by children, including socio-economic disadvantage. Staff are also aware of the cost of the school day. They have taken action to ensure family circumstances are not a barrier to children's access, participation, and inclusion.
- Senior leaders use PEF well to implement targeted interventions to support children with their health and wellbeing and raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. These interventions are accelerating identified children's progress in learning and helping to close attainment gaps.
- Senior leaders monitor attendance carefully. They work closely with families and partners, to build positive relationships and support families and children to improve attendance. Attendance is consistently above both the local authority and national average and is on an upward trajectory.



## Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher has surveyed parents to gather their views on the use of PEF through questionnaires at parents' evenings. Children have also had input to determining how the funding is used through a participatory budgeting approach. The headteacher should continue to consult widely with children, staff and parents to determine how best to use this additional funding.
- 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.
- Children receive two hours of high-quality physical education each week.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

Teachers use digital technology very effectively to support and enhance children's learning. This supports children very well to develop their computing science and data literacy skills.

The planned new school building provided a real-life context for staff to further develop the digital technology and data literacy curriculum. Staff were upskilled through coaching, mentoring and ongoing high quality professional learning in using digital technology. This developed their ability to understand the importance and relevance of critically analysing data to solve problems. Senior leaders and staff formed links with partners from other industries such as architecture, construction, engineering and surveying. This supported children to develop their skills for learning, life and work and explore how these industries use digital technology.

Children in P7 have been highly engaged in a project using sensors to gather, collate and interpret data about their learning environment. For example, children determined which table was the chattiest by measuring the carbon dioxide in different parts of the room. Children are developing a strong understanding of the importance of reliable data and forming evidence-based conclusions. Staff have shared this practice at national level.

In other examples, children in P1 created an infographic tracking the preferred lunch options over a three-week period. P2 children created a pictograph representing each of the individuals in the school. This is helping children to be curious and creative learners within meaningful contexts.

This approach to using digital technology and data literacy has resulted in an increase in children's engagement in learning. Staff identify that a steady increase in attainment in numeracy and mathematics has been as a result of this work. In addition, children who require additional support use digital technology tools successfully to support their learning. Staff also have more confidence and skill in using digital technology to plan, teach and assess children's learning. They are developing highly innovative approaches to providing children with individualised levels of support and challenge using digital technology.

## 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.