

# Summarised inspection findings

Loch Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

1 November 2022

## Key contextual information

Loch Primary School and Nursery Class is a non-denominational school situated in the Springhall area of Rutherglen in South Lanarkshire. The headteacher has been permanently in post since January 2021. A principal teacher completes the management team. Currently the school has a roll of 204 children across eight classes. Twenty-two children attend the nursery class. All children attending the nursery class access 1140 hours. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas 1 and 2. The school moved to a new building in 2008. The school has had two extensions added. These provide an additional four classrooms and additional space within the nursery class to support the expansion to 1140 hours. The school receives a significant allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). PEF funds additional staffing to provide universal and targeted support across the school.

### 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

- The headteacher provides highly effective and supportive leadership to the school community. The principal teacher supports her well. They demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring equity and excellence for all learners. Parents, staff and partners talk confidently about the headteacher's aspirational vision. The entire school community values and appreciates the difference she is making for children and families at Loch Primary School and Nursery Class.
- The headteacher recently engaged the school community in a refresh of the school vision and values. All stakeholders contributed their views using online surveys. As a result, the school's shared vision, Together Everyone Achieves More, Learning Opportunities Create Happiness (TEAM LOCH) is well understood. Parents, children and staff have a very strong sense of ownership of the vision and values. They talk confidently about what TEAM LOCH means to them. The headteacher ensures the vision and values, alongside her drive to ensure excellence and equity, underpin the life and work of the school. All staff are proud to be part of the team.
- The headteacher has prioritised the wellbeing of children as part of her recovery plan. She has worked closely with the principal teacher to plan and implement a range of supports and interventions to improve wellbeing. For example, targeted nurture groups, a Barnardos family support worker and a fully funded breakfast club. Children benefit greatly from this focus on wellbeing and are settled, happy at school and accessing learning across the curriculum.
- The headteacher engages children, parents and staff successfully in evaluating the work of the school. Parents are aware of the school's priorities and value the opportunities they get to inform this work. School improvement priorities are clear and focus on improving outcomes for learners and ensuring they learn in a nurturing environment. The headteacher makes effective use of collegiate time to allow staff to take forward areas for development. Teachers value this time and are actively involved in improving the work of the school.

- The Parent Council are actively involved in the life of the school. They successfully lead work on the cost of the school day. Through this work, the Parent Council have identified cost effective approaches to fundraising. All parents contribute to the 'participatory budgeting process', this ensures all parents are able to influence how the school's PEF is used. They have prioritised funding school trips and outings. This is removing any potential barriers to children engaging fully in the wider experiences of the school.
- The headteacher has established a strong ethos of continuous improvement. This is supporting all staff to improve their practice and lead change. Teachers are taking on an increasing range of leadership roles across the school. They value the trust the headteacher has in them to improve the curriculum. Teachers work well together, share ideas and plan together to improve approaches to learning and teaching. Almost all teachers have participated in learning activities to support a new approach to teach writing. They are now ready to engage in professional research and enquiry to develop further their understanding of child development and approaches to learning and teaching. In particular, staff should explore together their understanding of learning through play across the early level. All teachers should critically reflect on any new approaches to ensure they continue to develop their existing skills.
- The headteacher and principal teacher have developed a rigorous approach to quality assurance. The leadership team make effective use of quality assurance evidence to strengthen their understanding of the quality of children's experiences and the progress learners are making. The headteacher provides teachers with detailed feedback on planning, assessment and learning activities. She should continue to ensure feedback gives teachers clear next steps to develop further their practice. Teachers are highly motivated and committed to ensuring the school continues to improve.
- The headteacher actively seeks and acts upon the views and opinions of children across the school. She makes effective use of, How Good Is OUR School? during whole school assemblies. Children across the school articulate ways that their views and opinions have influenced the work of the school. They are particularly proud of their work in reviewing the school's positive relationship policy and house system. This is building their confidence and supporting the strong sense of pride they have in their school.

## 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

- The positive relationships between adults and children is evident during learning activities in almost all classes. All staff have participated in a range of activities to develop further their practice to support wellbeing and help children overcome difficulties in learning. Teachers are committed to providing the best for children and have high aspirations for all learners.
- Most children engage well in their learning in almost all lessons. They are motivated and work well together in pairs and small groups. In most classes, children demonstrate their understanding of what they are learning and know how to succeed.
- Across the school, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are continuing to develop a shared understanding of what highly effective learning and teaching looks like at Loch Primary. Senior leaders have introduced a range of commercial programmes to support learning across the curriculum. Teachers are now ready to use these programmes in a more flexible way. Taking a more flexible approach will allow teachers to plan more effectively for children to lead their own learning and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts.
- Most teachers plan to meet the different needs of learners well. They consider the tasks children are set, support children are given and expectations for groups and individuals. Teachers should continue to build on this positive work to develop further approaches to differentiation. This will support all teachers with their aspiration to meet the needs of all children all of the time.
- Most teachers use questioning effectively in most lessons. Almost all teachers are clear in their instructions and explanations. In a majority of classes, children are given thinking time before answering questions. A more consistent approach and use of questions that check for understanding will add value to children's learning, understanding and ability to use higher order thinking skills.
- Outdoor learning is a regular feature within the school day. Teachers are reintroducing play based learning and science, technology, engineering and maths activities. Children are motivated and engage well in play based activities that allow them to be curious and creative. Most teachers currently plan these in addition to their core learning programmes. Children often complete these tasks at the end of a lesson. Teachers should now use these approaches as part of everyday learning and teaching approaches. This will support children to lead their learning.
- All teachers have used digital tools effectively throughout the last two years to support children learning at home. Most teachers are building on this success in class. In a majority of classes, children use digital technology in creative ways. For example, children in Primary 6 created animations using video software.

- Senior leaders have created an assessment calendar to support teachers to plan summative assessments across the year. Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment well to support their professional judgement. Senior leaders work with teachers to use this information alongside progression pathways and benchmarks to support planning. Teachers are growing in confidence in their use and understanding of data to plan children's next steps in learning. There is now scope to support teachers to make sure assessment is planned in a more responsive way. This should ensure approaches to assessment are not overly resource driven.
- Formative assessment approaches are evident in most classes. Children are confident in using these approaches to evaluate their learning. Children use learning logs well to reflect on their learning and teachers respond with their evaluations. Teachers should continue to build on this approach to include next steps for learners. In the majority of classes, teachers give oral and written feedback to children on their progress in learning. Children are beginning to use this feedback to help them progress with their learning. Teachers use newly introduced skill cards well to help children understand how their learning in school is relevant to their life beyond the classroom.
- All staff engage well in moderation activities to support their professional judgement on progress of a level. Teachers have worked with their cluster colleagues to create a shared understanding of progression within a level. This is supporting further their understanding of attainment and achievement.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The curriculum has clear, guiding principles. The school community developed the curriculum together and reviewed it in June 2022. The key drivers of equity, nurture, progress and raising attainment are fundamental to the way the school provides learning pathways. This approach supports the choices staff make for children's learning and achievement. Embedded throughout the curriculum are the school values of nurturing, inclusive, happy, achieving, welcoming and respectful. The headteacher worked well with the community to articulate what makes their school unique.
- Progression pathways across the curriculum support teachers and learners to build on what children already know and make progress at their own rate. The pandemic had a negative impact on progression across the entire curriculum. Prior to the summer break, the school worked hard as a community to support children who had missed experiences usually provided to them at school. Teachers speak confidently about the areas of responsibility for all. They continue to build on digital skills, which they developed throughout the pandemic.
- Opportunities to learn across the curriculum are evident in all classes. The quality of learning in and about the outdoors continues to develop. New learning spaces, created by staff, provide more space and opportunity for independent learning. The school has developed an attractive library where home lending will be reintroduced shortly.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school has a very clear parental engagement position statement. Senior leaders have an open door policy and prioritise positive relationships. The work to ensure every family has equal opportunities to thrive is consistent with all of the other work of the school and its values.
- Post pandemic, the school is working hard to re-establish all of the activities within school that families enjoy. Throughout periods of closure, senior leaders prioritised the wellbeing and involvement of parents in their child's learning. They worked very hard to secure engagement in remote learning. Staff keep families informed through very regular use of social media about learning and achievement across the school. Photographs and film clips enhance this.
- The active Parent Council meets regularly to discuss the life and work of the school and policies such as PEF. Parent Council members continued to meet regularly during the pandemic to support the school.

## 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

- The headteacher has a clear strategy for developing health and wellbeing across the school. Children's wellbeing is at the heart of everything that happens at Loch Primary School. All staff have been involved in meaningful professional learning on nurturing principles, attachment and restorative approaches. This approach is leading to a strong, shared understanding of the importance of wellbeing and its impact on learning and achievement. All children learn in inclusive, nurturing classrooms. Children across the school get on well with staff and one another. They interact with each other and adults with respect, compassion and empathy. Staff support children well to use the school values to reflect on their behaviour and actions. Children are skilled at using approaches to resolving any difficulties that arise. A few children continue to access targeted nurture support within the school.
- All children complete mental health and wellbeing assessments at the start of each year. These processes help teachers identify quickly, any areas where children require additional support. In addition to this, all children complete 'All About Me' wellbeing assessments three times each year. They reflect on their wellbeing and identify where they might need extra help and support. Senior leaders use this information effectively to ensure almost all children access the right support at the right time. All children complete daily wellbeing check-ins. Staff use this information effectively to monitor children's wellbeing and respond quickly and sensitively to any worries and concerns. As a result, children trust the adults in the school. Almost all children feel safe at school and can identify at least one adult they can talk to if they are worried or upset.
- Almost all children have a strong understanding of their own wellbeing. They talk confidently about how their experiences at school supports and improves their wellbeing. Primary 6 children value their role as a buddy to new Primary 1 children. They understand and are proud of their role in ensuring younger children are included and safe in the playground. Most children who have accessed the nurture room talk positively about the impact this has had on their achievements. Children across the school demonstrate empathy and compassion in their interactions with peers, staff and visitors.
- Children experience a broad and progressive health and wellbeing curriculum. They talk about how this learning helps them improve their mental and physical health. Children enjoy swimming lessons they access through their Physical Education (PE) programme. Most children talk about the impact of PE and sport on improving their health. The principal teacher has engaged with parents to share changes to the relationships, sexual health and parenthood curriculum. Parents value the approaches within the school to help children learn about protected characteristics.
- The headteacher is aware of the need to continue to support a few children and families attend school more regularly. She has developed a comprehensive system to monitor and track

attendance. Although it is early in the session, there are early signs of improvement for a few children.

- Children who may require a Coordinated Support Plan are considered for this each year. Senior leaders effectively coordinate multi-agency support. They are proactive in engaging with other agencies to meet the complex needs of a few children.
- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of the short and long-term barriers children may face. As a result, a majority of children access appropriate additional support. All children with potential barriers to learning have interventions and targeted support planned and monitored through a staged intervention process. The comprehensive approach to planning and monitoring additional support ensures all children access appropriate support. Many interventions are short term as targets are clear and closely monitored and evaluated. Children's views are evident in Additional Support Plans. The principal teacher ensures all targets are clear and measurable. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress with their individual targets. Moving forward it will be important to ensure approaches do not become overly bureaucratic. This will ensure teachers have a clear understanding of the most appropriate approaches to meet the needs of all learners.
- The headteacher uses PEF to fund a Barnardos support worker two days per week. This support worker provides valuable support for children and families in school and at home. Children access counselling, one-to-one support and small group supports. This is strengthening the home school partnership and contributing to improving the wellbeing of learners.
- Loch Primary School shares a campus with St Anthony's Primary School. Children play together in the playground and engage in a range of shared activities. They share a breakfast club, Primary 7 residential trip and participate in a range of community events together. Children are very proud of the award they received for their joint work on challenging sectarianism. This is strengthening further children's understanding of their local community and discrimination.
- Almost all support for learning teachers and support assistants provide effective support for individual children and small groups in and out of class. This is leading to children who require additional support accessing their learning and making good progress. The headteacher uses PEF to employ additional teachers. They work effectively alongside class teachers to promote equity and close identified attainment gaps. Together, staff are making progress in closing the attainment gaps.
- The senior leadership team ensure children with additional support needs, those who have English as an additional language and children who are care experienced are making progress. Staff and partners support identified learners well in an inclusive environment. They are well placed to continue to make progress in their learning.

## 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

- The school's attainment data has quickly recovered in most areas to pre-pandemic levels. This is having a positive impact on children's progress and attainment. In June 2022, P7 children moved on to secondary school with most having secured Curriculum for Excellence second level in reading, talking and listening and mathematics. The majority achieved second level in writing.
- Children's progress at Curriculum for Excellence early, first and second level in literacy and numeracy is good. Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. There is variability in attainment across each year group. School achievement of a level data shows a varying picture across year groups and over time. The most recent data from June 2022 shows considerable improvement at first and second level from June 2021. Improvement from June 2020 where the negative impact of the pandemic was evident is significant. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress towards their targets in learning.
- Comprehensive school data shows that attainment is predicted to rise in literacy and numeracy to expected levels. Inspection activity supports this prediction. The headteacher and principal teacher are continuing to build the confidence of teachers in their use of data and moderation to ensure professional judgements are increasingly robust.

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

#### Listening and talking

- Almost all children are socially articulate, engage in conversation, share ideas and listen well in class. At early level, the impact of the pandemic has resulted in a minority of children having speech which is less clear and more limited in vocabulary. At first level and second level, children are articulate and listen well in class and to their peers. Across the school, children need more time to regain their confidence in expressing their own thoughts and ideas when working in class.

#### Reading

- At early level, children read pictorial cues well. They tell the stories of their drawings with enthusiasm. At first level, most children read their school texts fluently but not always with confidence. They persevere with words they are unsure how to read. By second level, most children read their chosen book fluently and discuss the reasons for their choice. They are less confident in analysing their texts. In class, children benefit from the contribution of their peers, sharing new vocabulary. Across the school, all children read daily for pleasure and make good use of a range of fiction and non-fiction texts when learning across the curriculum.

## Writing

- School data shows that across the school, attainment in writing dropped below expected levels during the pandemic. In a majority of classes, this has now improved to beyond pre-pandemic levels. The approaches to writing that the school is now taking are leading to improved outcomes for children.
- At early level, evidence of prior learning shows that most children form letters correctly, and leave spaces between words. Most write simple sentences independently and use simple punctuation. By the end of first level, evidence of prior and current learning shows children create a range of short texts using a planning format. They spell most commonly used words correctly and write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. By second level, evidence of prior and current learning shows most children use a wide range of vocabulary to convey thoughts and ideas in their writing. They use a range of punctuation accurately and organise ideas logically in paragraphs. Children are developing confidence in using similes and metaphors to improve their descriptive writing. Children at all stages would benefit from more opportunities in writing to express their own ideas freely.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- In almost all classes, attainment in numeracy is rising, recovering from the pandemic. In the minority of classes, attainment now exceeds pre-pandemic levels. Attainment levels are mixed across the stages. A significant number of children receive extra help to improve their confidence and raise standards.

## Number, money and measure

- Children who just started school are building on the counting and number recognition skills they gained in nursery. Children who have attained early level add and subtract accurately. Most are learning to solve missing number problems. Evidence from prior learning indicates that they identify coins and do simple calculations with money. At first level, most children are gaining confidence in using place value to understand big numbers. At second level, most children use place value confidently to solve problems. Evidence from prior learning shows most children are confident in using money, number and measure processes.

## Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children recognise common, two-dimensional shapes. At first level, children engage well with revision on symmetry. As a result, they identify symmetry confidently and create symmetrical patterns using technology and creative resources. At second level, most children use coordinates well within meaningful contexts.

## Information handling

- Children, as part of their house team activity, use information-handling skills very well to keep account of points awarded. Through pupil voice, children generate and use their own data in meaningful ways.

## Attainment over time

- The school is an original 'Scottish Attainment Challenge School'. Senior leaders have been tracking their progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap for some time. School achievement of a level data shows a varying picture across year groups and over time. Attainment over time for the last three years has been variable due to the pandemic. However, strategies to accelerate progress have ensured attainment in literacy and numeracy is improving. Senior leaders track progress across all curricular areas.

## Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children's achievements are celebrated regularly through the life and work of the school. Regular assembly times celebrate work ethic and attitudes. Citizenship awards recognise the contribution of others in line with the school values. Children are proud of their own achievements and the achievements of others. They recognise and value the skills and qualities of their peers. Children covet the headteacher award. Every child is on a school committee. Evidence of achievement shows that all committees made a significant contribution to the life and work of the school. Children talk positively about the positive impact they are having on their school. They are beginning to see how they can contribute to the positive development of their community beyond the school.
- Children take part in after school clubs when they are available. The school monitors and tracks all children's achievements at home and in school. This is in line with data collection across the school to ensure equity. Senior leaders should extend this tracking to include the skills children develop through their participation.

## Equity for all learners

- The school has a clear position statement regarding the cost of the school day. The headteacher ensures all equipment for learning is provided. There is no cost barrier in attending after school clubs and excursions. The Parent Council and headteacher meet costs through PEF and successful fundraising.
- All adults who work within the school are deeply knowledgeable about the socio-economic position of the community. Equity, compassion and ambition for children alongside effective use of data is enabling teachers and staff to respond promptly to children's identified needs.
- The headteacher and principal teacher are meticulous in how they use additional funding provided through the Scottish Attainment Challenge. This includes children and families having a say in where they feel the priorities are. All spending is evidence-based and the outcomes are tracked and evaluated. Evidence over time detailed in SIP reports outlines clearly the improved outcomes for learners as a result of the initiatives selected. For example, highly-effective approaches to nurture ensures the wellbeing needs of all children are met. This focus on nurture is having a positive impact on the learning environment. As a result, all children learn in calm, supportive classrooms and there is a positive impact on their attainment.
- The school is making positive progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap between the most and least deprived within the school population.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

Approaches to nurture.

The school has developed highly effective approaches to nurture over an extended period. This has developed from a single nurture base to a whole school universal approach. Targeted nurture groups provide additional support to those who require intensive support. Teachers work very well with support staff to identify clear targets for children accessing targeted support.

Staff have engaged in meaningful professional learning resulting in a strong, shared understanding of nurturing principles. Eight staff have received accreditation for their learning.

Strong partnership with parents ensures a shared understanding of the nurturing principles and gives practical support and ideas for parents to use at home.

All children experience a strong nurturing learning environment. Classrooms and social areas are calm with children engaging in high quality social experiences. Instances of bullying are low, behaviour is very good, children feel safe and secure. Almost all children have their wellbeing needs met in their classroom. Children have developed a strong empathetic approach in their actions and behaviour.

## 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.