

Summarised inspection findings

East Wemyss Primary School

Fife Council

26 September 2023

Key contextual information

East Wemyss Primary School is a non-denominational primary school, which is situated in the village of East Wemyss, Fife. The school has seven classes.

The leadership team consists of the headteacher and a principal teacher, both of whom have been in post for approximately three years. They were appointed during the pandemic. A temporary headteacher was in post prior to the headteacher's appointment.

The school roll at the time of the inspection was 172. In September 2021, 53.2% of the school roll lived within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2.

The school attendance in 2021-22 was 89.49%. The attendance from 2022 to date this term is 90.06%.

East Wemyss 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.

The headteacher is also the headteacher of Coaltown of Wemyss Primary School.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Senior leaders and staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. They use this well to inform their work and to provide appropriate pastoral support to children and families. They know all children and their families well.
- The school values of teamwork and respect are evident throughout the school. They are seen clearly in the positive relationships across the school. The values were created a few years ago after much consultation between senior leaders, staff, children and parents. The school's vision statement is linked to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The vision does influence practice, in the experiences that staff provide for children to be successful. However, senior leaders acknowledge that some work is still required to strengthen how the vision impacts consistently on practice. This is true also in relation to the school aims.
- The headteacher demonstrates strong and caring leadership skills. She has led the school well over the past three years and is respected and valued by children, staff, parents and partners. The headteacher and the principal teacher work well together. They have created a culture in which almost all staff feel supported appropriately to undertake their roles. Staff speak very

positively of the ways in which senior leaders have carefully nurtured a collaborative, empowering culture in the school. They also highlight how effective leadership is strengthening continuous improvement.

- Senior leaders have a clear strategic vision for the school, which is impacting positively on practice. The school improvement plan for 2022-23 focused on three key priorities: improving attendance across the school; improving attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy; and becoming a digital school. While improvements can be seen in all these areas, the school's work on enhancing its digital capacity has been particularly successful. This has resulted in the school attaining the Digital Schools Award Scotland. Senior leaders talk positively about their plan for 2023-24, sharing early ideas about its key focuses and ongoing areas of improvement. These include continuing to improve both attendance and key aspects of attainment. Senior leaders should now take an increased role in ensuring that systems linked to planning to meet all children's needs are robust and easy to access for appropriate staff.
- Senior leaders are continuing to develop a helpful culture of self-evaluation, leading to continuous improvement. They are working well with staff in a range of self-evaluation activities to strengthen practice across the school. These activities are detailed on a quality assurance calendar for all staff. They include termly observations of classroom practice, reviews of teachers' planning and children's jotters, and comprehensive analysis of school data. Senior leaders and staff also regularly review their progress in meeting the school's targets for improvement and discuss possible areas of development. All staff demonstrate confidence in engaging in professional dialogue. A next step for senior leaders will be to use more effectively the breadth of data that the school has on its performance to inform the school improvement priorities. Almost all staff agree they are supported well to engage in a range of professional learning. Increasingly, this learning links closely to supporting the wellbeing needs of individuals and to contributing to school improvement.
- Most teachers agree that they have regular opportunities to undertake leadership roles. This has involved a few teachers supporting the learning of their peers in digital technologies. It has also involved a few teachers leading targeted groups for children, such as Seasons for Growth. Senior leaders and staff identify these leadership roles through professional review and development processes and school improvement planning processes.
- A majority of children enjoy leadership opportunities across the school, both in and outwith class. This includes a few children from P4 organising and taking part in litter picks in the local community. It also includes a few children from P5 to P7 acting as digital leaders, and a few other children acting as road safety officers. These roles help children to develop important skills in leadership and to enact well the school values of respect and teamwork. They also allow children to engage more often with members of the community. Children at P6 and P7 have also been involved successfully in leading activities linked to the John Muir Award and the Heritage Hero Award.

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 school has a very welcoming environment. All staff work well together to create a respectful learning environment, in which children can become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens, and effective contributors. They demonstrate an awareness of the school values of teamwork and respect through their actions. Most children also demonstrate an awareness of the school values. Most children are developing well a positive understanding of their rights under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- All teachers have worked collaboratively to create a shared understanding of 'the model lesson'. They are now working to embed this more across the school. This will help them to ensure increased consistency in high-quality learning and teaching and assessment over time.
- Almost all children have a positive attitude towards their learning and the learning of their peers. Almost all children agree that they enjoy learning at school all or most of the time. They participate well and are motivated in classes where they are active and can collaborate with their peers. They are also motivated when they are challenged in their learning. Children across all stages are developing skills in digital learning. This is helping them to develop new skills, which they are applying across their learning.
- Most teachers promote children's creativity and enthusiasm for learning well through a variety of activities that encourage independent learning. The majority of children have the confidence to volunteer answers and participate fully in lessons. Most children's confidence is developed effectively in classes through teacher's appropriate use of praise. While most teachers provide a variety of verbal and written feedback, a next step for them will be to improve the quality of this feedback. This should lead to further improvement in children's learning. All teachers should ensure more consistently that children act on verbal feedback.
- Across all classes, teachers use consistent routines and give children clear instructions. This includes teachers sharing the learning intentions effectively and helping children to understand how they can be successful in their learning. Most teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. Children are encouraged to 'think, pair and share' with their peers before answering a question in a majority of classes. A next step for teachers will be to develop more consistently their use of questioning to develop children's higher-order thinking skills.
- Teachers increasingly use the outdoors to enhance children's learning. For example, children learn outdoors at the early level to develop their understanding of time. They also work outdoors in 'the chicken garden' to support learning which links different subjects. In P1 and P2, teachers also use aspects of play-based learning to motivate children to lead their learning

increasingly. Play-based opportunities are also helping children to develop their imagination and creativity.

- Across all classes, teachers seek to meet the needs of all children. However, too often teaching is directed to the majority of children. Teachers need to focus on meeting the needs of a few children who need extra support more consistently through improved and timely interventions. Teachers are beginning to help children understand the skills they are developing throughout the curriculum.
- Most teachers use a variety of assessment approaches effectively to support children's learning. These approaches help children to understand their learning. They also help teachers to develop increasingly reliable information about children's progress. Senior leaders have developed a detailed tracking system, which includes teachers' judgements. Senior leaders and staff discuss the range of information they have gathered on children's progress at learning and teaching meetings. They use appropriately Fife Council's progression pathways and the National Benchmarks to support dialogue at these meetings.
- Teachers are beginning to use and understand data well to inform planning for children's next steps and appropriate interventions. Their planning is clear and takes good account of what children will learn and how they can be successful. While most teachers consider assessment as part of their planning, this practice needs to become more consistent across the school. This will help teachers to have a better understanding of children's progress at key points in the year. Most children contribute to teachers' planning by helping to set the direction of their learning through interdisciplinary (IDL) topics. Staff across the school should now give children more opportunities to contribute to plans for learning across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and teachers engage increasingly in moderation activities, both within the school as well as with teachers from another school. These activities are helping them to develop a shared understanding of national standards.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders and staff have recently reviewed and updated their curriculum rationale. This highlights literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing as major drivers for school improvement. It also highlights the importance of children developing transferable skills, including digital skills.
- Due to the unique setting of the school, which is situated near farmland, caves and beaches, outdoor learning features well across the curriculum. Staff demonstrate varied confidence in supporting children's learning in this way. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop their skills further through professional learning.
- Teachers follow Fife Council's progression pathways for most curriculum areas. Teachers should consider how to use these pathways more effectively to continue to add depth, and personalisation and choice, to the curriculum. Staff recognise the need to develop skills-based progression pathways in food-based learning for all children. New resources have been purchased to support this aspect of learning.
- All teachers are involved in developing aspects of the curriculum in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They are aware of the work they still need to do to ensure that all learning activities support raising attainment and encourage children's creativity and independent learning.
- Teachers continue to develop their approaches to support children's learning by increasingly linking different curriculum areas. This supports children to learn in a motivating way.
- Staff should continue to seek opportunities to link with local businesses and the wider community to enhance the curriculum further. These links could also provide increased opportunities for children to learn skills for learning, life and work.
- Teachers deliver two hours of high-quality physical education for all children each week. While teachers deliver religious and moral education through IDL topics, they should review this arrangement to ensure children experience progression in their learning. All children receive their entitlement to appropriate language provision.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Most parents appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and staff. They talk positively about how they have led change over the last three years.
- Most parents agree that they receive helpful, regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing. This includes informal feedback, reports and learning profiles. The majority of parents agree that they receive this information at the right time. While a few parents appreciate the school's regular updates on social media, they think these could be more consistent across classes.
- Opportunities for parents to engage with the school through clubs and activities are beginning to return after the pandemic. Staff should capitalise on parents' enthusiasm to become involved in activities.
- The Parent Council uses social media effectively to inform parents of their activities. The majority of parents feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the Parent Council. Members of the Parent Council fundraise to subsidise the costs of trips, ensuring that all children can participate. They also regularly discuss aspects of school improvement.

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

satisfactory

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

- Children's wellbeing sits at the heart of the work of East Wemyss Primary School. All staff and partners are proactive in promoting positive relationships. They treat children fairly and with respect. They also demonstrate kindness to all children. This helps to create a climate where the majority of children say they feel safe, and they have someone to speak to if they are upset or worried about something in school. Most children say that staff listen to their views and take their views into account. The majority of children agree that other children treat them fairly and with respect.
- The wellbeing indicators and 'the five ways of wellbeing' are evident on displays throughout the school. Senior leaders and staff discuss these regularly, in classes and at school assemblies. The majority of children speak knowledgeably about their wellbeing and can link their understanding of their wellbeing to the wellbeing indicators. Staff also use the language of the UNCRC to help children understand their rights and the rights of their peers. This is helping children to develop respectful behaviour more consistently.
- The school's health and wellbeing curriculum includes a few aspects of learning that are progressive across all stages, such as the programme on relationships, sexual health and parenthood. It also includes aspects of learning that link well to current areas of concern in children's lives, such as how to stay safe online. These aspects help children to become well-informed about key aspects of their health and wellbeing. Staff should continue to develop the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure there is progression in all aspects of children's learning. This will help children to develop a more holistic understanding of their health and wellbeing and to be responsible for taking care of themselves. Staff should take account of Fife Council's health and wellbeing progression pathway as it develops further, to support children's experiences in learning about their health and wellbeing.
- Staff track children's attendance consistently. This is leading to improvements in the attendance of a few children. As acknowledged by senior leaders, an ongoing priority for them will be to continue to improve children's attendance over time. Staff should continue to work with parents and children to help ensure that any barriers to individual children attending school are addressed.
- Senior leaders and staff engage well with partners, including the school chaplain, staff from social work, educational psychology, and Active Schools. Partners provide a range of interventions for children and their families. These are helping a few children to attend school more regularly. They are also helping a few children to develop improved self-esteem and motivation for learning.
- Senior leaders and staff understand most children's individual needs, including those of the most vulnerable learners. They seek appropriately to meet these needs through a range of

interventions, including the use of caring pupil support assistants. Staff now need to ensure increased rigour in how they record information linked to children's needs. This information should be easily accessible to senior leaders and staff, as required. Senior leaders and staff should also produce clear and sufficiently detailed plans to meet the needs of children who require specific support to access the curriculum. Senior leaders should ensure these plans include well-targeted interventions, which are reviewed timeously and include the views of children and parents.

- Children who are care-experienced are supported well. They have appropriate plans to meet their needs, which are reviewed regularly by key partners. Senior leaders confirm that these children have had their needs considered for a Coordinated Support Plan.
- The wellbeing of a few children continues to be supported appropriately by Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) interventions. These interventions include staff supporting individual children who have specific needs in their learning. A next step for senior leaders and staff will be to monitor and evaluate the impact of these interventions more regularly and effectively. This will help to ensure that all interventions remain fit for purpose for all children over time. It will also help to ensure that staff target all additional support as effectively as possible, benefitting those children most in need.
- Children are developing well an appreciation for diversity and the need to respect all people. They are supported to do this through ongoing dialogue with staff, regular input at school assemblies, and health and wellbeing inserts in the curriculum. They also supported by observing staff relating well to one another and to children and staff providing positive role models.
- Senior leaders also use assemblies well to celebrate all children's success and achievements. This helps children to feel included, valued and well-supported.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- The school's attainment data for 2021-22 shows variation across year groups. Overall, children's attainment at early, first and second levels in literacy and numeracy was below local authority and national averages. Positively, school data for 2022-23 demonstrates some improvement in children's attainment across most year groups in literacy and numeracy.
- The headteacher and principal teacher continue to build the confidence of teachers in their use of data and moderation activities to ensure that professional judgements become increasingly robust. Staff are not yet able to demonstrate fully the progress of children with additional support needs.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At all stages, most children are socially articulate. They engage readily in conversation with adults and peers. The majority of children are confident when expressing their views and can take turns effectively during group discussions. A few children at second level need to develop further their skills in listening and turn talking. They are not yet confident in valuing the contribution of others to build on their own thinking. Further opportunities for children to debate their ideas and opinions would help to build their confidence and skills in this area.
- The majority of children listen well to instructions from their teachers. A next step for most children is to develop further their skills in forming challenging questions for each other.

Reading

- Most children enjoy reading for pleasure. At early level, children enjoy staff reading to them, and they engage well with picture books. At first level and second levels, children name their favourite authors and explain why they like their books. Children at first level articulate the difference between fiction and non-fiction and explain authors' use of language to build a character in a novel. The majority of children across the school read fluently.
- Children at first level need to develop further their skills in answering comprehension questions of increasing complexity. They should also begin to create questions of their own related to texts they are reading. At second level, the majority of children read with expression and identify the main idea in a text. Children at second level would benefit from increased opportunities to explore a wider range of texts and genres, such as graphic novels or blogs.

- A few children are leading the reorganisation of the school library. They are making the library space attractive and easy to access for their peers. This should help to promote further the culture of reading in the school.

Writing

- Across the school, children at all levels write for a variety of purposes. At early level, most children can write a sentence using capital letters and full stops. At first level, most children use punctuation accurately and can identify the features of writing in different genres. They know how to use notes to inform their planning when writing at length. At second level, a few children are not yet secure in spelling more complex words. The majority of children lack confidence using grammar, vocabulary and techniques effectively to add atmosphere to their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Children at early level estimate within measure well. They count accurately in twos. At first level, the majority of children round in 10s and 100s. Almost all count in 5s, 10s and 100s. The majority of children write simple fractions, but most children are unsure of equivalent fractions. Most children would benefit from more support to develop their understanding of how to write sums of money in the correct form. They also need more practice to develop further their understanding of time. At second level, almost all children round to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000 and multiply decimal fractions by 10 and 100. Almost all children need to develop further their understanding of how to order decimals and fractions accurately.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children have a strong understanding of two-dimensional shapes. At first level and second levels, almost all children have a strong understanding of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects.

Information handling

- Across the school, the majority of children identify information from bar charts and graphs appropriate to their stage. At first level, most children understand well different types of information handling and how to use these appropriately. Children at all stages would benefit further from increased opportunities to collect and organise data including in real life contexts.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have introduced effective systems to ensure that children are making better progress over time. This is beginning to have a positive impact on attainment, with improvement evident this year.
- Staff are using a variety of robust tracking and monitoring systems to understand children's progress over time more effectively. Staff increasingly track children's progress to identify learners who are on track to achieve expected levels. They also identify children who are not on track to ensure that effective interventions are put in place to narrow any potential gaps in learning. This is leading to increased engagement and improved pace of learning for children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The majority of children across the school develop skills in music and sport well. A few children have received awards from Active Schools Scotland, in, for example, football and netball.

- Children from P4 to P7 achieve citizenship skills and leadership skills from being on the litter-picking committee and from being Junior Leaders and Junior Road Safety Officers. The Junior Leaders organised the Summer Spectacular and Sports Day for the school. The Junior Road Safety Officers also developed organisational skills in leading a campaign to encourage safe parking outside the school and producing a video to share with the community.
- Children and staff have recently achieved a National Digital schools award. This recognises their considerable work in developing skills in technology and in children and staff's confidence in using these across the school. A few children from P6 and P7 are Digital Leaders and support well the learning of other children.
- All children from P5 have achieved awards linked to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Wild Challenge. A few children from P6 have achieved Heritage Hero awards, from Archaeology Scotland. A few children from P7 have achieved the John Muir Award for their work at Ardroy Outdoor Education Centre.
- Staff celebrate children's achievements every Friday at a whole school assembly. This develops children's esteem and confidence. A next step for staff will be to track children's wider achievement more thoroughly and link this to children's skills development.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding appropriately to provide additional support for the most vulnerable learners. As a result, these learners are supported to feel safe and secure in school.
- Senior leaders and staff track children's attendance at clubs and activities against the wellbeing indicators. This is helping them to provide suitable opportunities for all children.
- Senior leaders and staff understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. They are supporting families' wellbeing with discretion and sensitivity.

Other relevant evidence

- 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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.