

Summarised inspection findings

Pitteuchar East Primary School

Fife Council

31 October 2023

Key contextual information

Pitteuchar East Primary School serves the southern Glenrothes precincts of Pitteuchar, Stenton, Finglassie and Lochty View in Fife. The school was opened in 1970 and has a large playground and outdoor spaces.

The school roll is currently 225. The nine classes this session are made up of a mix of single stream and composite. The headteacher has been in post for 12 years. She is assisted by a deputy headteacher (DHT) and a recently appointed acting principal teacher (PT) for progression across the early level. This post is funded by Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

Pitteuchar East Primary School is one of nine primary schools associated with Auchmuty High School, with almost all P7 pupils transferring there.

In February 2022 60% of P1-P7 pupils were registered for free school meals. Of those P1-P7 pupils registered for free school meals and present on the day of the survey, 19% took a free school meal.

In September 2022 just over 33% of pupils lived in deciles 1-3 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation with 25% of pupils reported as having additional support needs. In September 2022, there were nine pupils with a main home language which was not English, Gaelic, Doric, Sign Language or Scots.

The school received £86,975. PEF this session.

Pitteuchar East 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.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- Most children are clear about the meaning of the values of nurture, inclusion, respect, compassion and ambition. They added the value of ambition to reflect their achievements in learning and voted for the school motto, 'It's all about the bairns'. The values are celebrated in assemblies with children receiving a 'call out' if they have demonstrated a value during the school day. However, the school values are not yet embedded fully into practice or leading to sustained change and improvement which is meaningful and improving outcomes for children. Senior leaders, together with staff and children, have started to review the school vision and aims this session to include partner and families' views. This will help to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice in the work of the school. Staff should consider linking the vision, values and aims to the curriculum rationale. This could support a whole school

approach and a deeper understanding of the Pitteuchar East primary school context and how it influences a meaningful curriculum.

- Senior leaders support and lead staff's professional learning, although do not yet consistently monitor and evaluate the impact this has on children's outcomes and how it aligns to improvement priorities. The reintroduction of joint working with cluster colleagues will support teachers to develop their understanding of highly-effective and creative teaching approaches and the cycle of moderation.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue to plan for peer collaborative learning, joint planning and the undertaking of peer observations. They should ensure that these planned approaches include open and clear communication between all staff.
- The majority of staff have leadership roles, including leading on interventions, curriculum areas and approaches supporting children's wellbeing. Senior leaders need to develop further a collective responsibility linked to the process of change. It would be beneficial to revisit the remits of all staff. This should help identify opportunities for leadership roles across the whole school community linked to school improvement priorities. This would help to improve the pace and effectiveness of change.
- Staff and senior leaders consult with children to gather their views about their experiences. They do this through pupil focus groups and learning walks. Children across the school are keen to undertake leadership roles and have a greater role in implementing change across the school. A minority of older children have opportunities to lead, including as 'Learning Reps', buddies and playground monitors. Staff should continue to develop all children's roles in contributing to improvements and being involved in decisions which affect them. The headteacher should work with staff to resume pupil groups. For example, a pupil council, eco school's group and a group promoting children's rights. This will enable children to influence change and improvement and develop leadership skills across the school in meaningful ways. Children are enthusiastic about how they can improve their school. With support, children could become more involved by using 'How good is OUR school?' to gather their views on what matters to them.
- Senior leaders acknowledge that the pace of change could be developed and accelerated to improve children's outcomes. They need to increase the pace of change and set more ambitious timescales to take forward relevant school improvement priorities. Staff use 'How Good is Our School?' (4th edition) to review their work. This now needs to be carried out on a more regular basis and result in key actions and timescales. Senior leaders use information generated from quality assurance activities and the views of staff to identify improvement priorities. They take account of children's contributions to school improvement which are gathered by the 'Learning Reps'.
- Senior leaders have established a quality assurance calendar to coordinate the range of approaches used to evaluate the work of the school. They undertake regular meetings with staff to review children's progress. Senior leaders need to undertake focused and regular class observations to support greater consistency in learning and teaching approaches. This will gather evidence on learning and teaching practice and better support the monitoring of children's work.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the social and economic factors affecting the school community. They are aware of the challenges families are currently facing as a result of the pandemic and the rising cost-of-living crisis. This results in direct support for families and informs priorities and actions to improve outcomes for children experiencing barriers to their

learning. The school receives additional funding from PEF. The headteacher, depute headteacher and staff understand the adversity and challenges faced by families because of the pandemic and rising cost of living. There is a need to use this knowledge, supported by analysis of data, to identify more effectively gaps in children's attainment. This will support strategic planning and provide a clearer focus on raising attainment across the school. Parents and learners are not currently involved in determining the focus of the PEF spend.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Most children benefit from nurturing and supportive relationships with staff. Most children enjoy learning and feel comfortable approaching staff with questions and suggestions. Almost all staff at Pitteuchar East primary school know children well as individuals and are aware of their needs.
- The majority of children are motivated and engaged in their learning when undertaking tasks independently, in pairs and in groups. This positive attitude to learning is more evident when tasks and activities are stimulating and well matched to the needs and interests of individuals. The majority of children behave well and demonstrate the school value of respect. A minority of children do not always engage well and lead their learning unless they have close adult supervision. This has a negative impact on engagement for other children. Senior leaders and staff should work together to ensure a consistency of high expectations and strategies to improve engagement across the school. This should improve outcomes for all children. Support staff are a well-integrated part of the learning and teaching team. They work well with a few children and effectively meet their additional support needs.
- Most teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. In the majority of lessons, teachers share with children the purpose of their learning and how to be successful. Staff should have more regular discussions with children about the skills and knowledge they are developing and link these skills to real life experiences. This should help children apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- The majority of teachers observe children well during teaching and intervene appropriately to provide further instruction or clarification. The feedback given by teachers to children on their learning is predominantly in relation to writing and numeracy. This is helping the majority of children to know what they are doing well and understand their next steps. The 'Learning Reps' have worked with staff to create a helpful feedback agreement. This clear guidance is leading to a more consistent approach across most classes in giving feedback. Senior leaders and staff should now review their learning and teaching policy to ensure a more consistent approach to other aspects of learning, teaching and assessment across the school.
- A few teachers use questioning techniques effectively to extend and explore children's thinking. Almost all teachers use closed questioning to check children's understanding. Senior leaders and staff should now share effective practice to ensure all staff use a blend of questioning to extend children's thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Most staff make effective use of digital technology to support learning and teaching. All teachers use interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching which enriches children's learning experiences. For example, children benefit from teaching presentations, explanatory video

clips, and games to support their understanding. A few teachers use an electronic tool to guide children to some of these opportunities. The majority of children's independent digital skills are developing well through regular access to the school's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) suite and class-based devices. For example, most children can log on independently, access digital programmes and create presentations, animations and films. They access matrix bar codes to support learning activities. Older children investigate websites effectively to identify best value for money.

- Staff are keen to develop play pedagogy in P1 and beyond. They are engaging with professional learning using national guidance 'Realising the Ambition, Being Me' to support this work. Teachers are developing the environment to stimulate learners to be curious and creative. Staff are beginning to observe learning undertaken and intervene to support and develop further children's thinking and understanding. As a result, children's experiences are enhanced. Senior leaders, the newly appointed PT and staff should work together to ensure a consistency of high-quality practice across the early level. This should include working with practitioners in the Early Learning and Childcare setting.
- Teachers use a range of assessment data to measure the progress children are making in literacy and numeracy. This includes Scottish National Standardised Assessments, other standardised assessments and ongoing class assessments. There is a lack of consistency in the use of assessments to support teachers' professional judgements throughout the school. Senior leaders should now develop a consistent, whole-school approach to assessing children's progress and to ensure assessment approaches are integral to the planning of next steps.
- Senior leaders and teachers are developing approaches to moderation. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need for staff to take part in further moderation activity with colleagues from other schools. This will support teachers' professional judgements about children's attainment and their understanding of national standards within the curriculum.
- Teachers use local authority pathways to support their planning for children's learning. Children show increased motivation to learn when they are involved in planning contexts that are relevant and linked to their interests. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop and review their approaches to planning. This should include planning over different timescales, using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. Teachers should make more effective use of National Benchmarks to support assessment. This should provide a more consistent approach to planning progressive learning experiences which build on children's prior learning across all curriculum areas.
- Senior leaders and teachers discuss information related to children's progress and attainment regularly. Teachers make effective use of information they gather to plan and implement interventions for children who are not achieving expected levels. Teachers and support staff evaluate the impact of these interventions regularly to monitor children's progress. Senior leaders should support this review process to better record and identify progress at regular planned intervals. This should result in more rigour and clarity for staff on the key points of progress being made by individual children and progress being achieved.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Most teachers refer to learning pathways provided by Fife Council to plan learning across all curricular areas. Teachers are more familiar using the pathways relating to literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and staff should now work together to develop these pathways further to more specifically show individual progression across each level. This can ensure appropriate pace across the curriculum for all learners.
- Staff deliver a modern languages programme through weekly lessons in German. All children also benefit from learning British Sign Language. Senior leaders and staff should now ensure that class activities support language development more effectively throughout the week in a variety of contexts. This will allow children to develop and apply key vocabulary more successfully.
- All children learn outdoors in the school grounds regularly. Children are motivated and engage well in these activities as they are encouraged to be curious and creative. Such experiences support children well to learn and apply their skills in new contexts. For example, older children are learning and developing new skills through the John Muir Award. Other opportunities such as den building, orienteering, scavenger hunting and being creative with materials in the 'Play Pod' are supporting skills development further. Staff have created an overview to exemplify outdoor learning experiences at early, first and second level. Senior leaders and staff should now develop this further to ensure planned experiences are part of a progressive programme across all levels in outdoor learning.
- A few teachers have successfully led developments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). They have received a STEM Nation award based on this work. Some of this work is shared with the community during an annual STEM showcase event. STEM activities, such as 'Tinker Time', are helping a minority of children to develop key skills including self-confidence, resilience, problem solving and creativity.
- Children receive two hours of quality physical education (PE) each week. The quality of PE should be monitored and improved to ensure consistency across the school.
- Children are given opportunities to learn about key Christian festivals and other world religions. Senior leaders should now re-establish partnerships, including with their local church and other resources, societies and groups to deepen children's understanding of world religions.
- Teachers have supported a majority of children to obtain an active library card enabling them to access their local library. As a result of intervention by the school, almost all children have had the opportunity to explore their local library. Senior leaders and staff should look for ways to utilise their own library in school more effectively. As part of this, an audit of texts should be undertaken to ensure children can access more up to date texts and develop their understanding of diversity and difference.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and staff have built very effective partnerships and relationships with a wide range of partners. This supports staff's professional learning well by providing resources and knowledge with a particular focus on adverse childhood experiences. Partners provide children with a range of creative and wellbeing activities linked to the local and wider community. This helps develop relationships which inform the types of parental engagement delivered by school staff.
- Staff plan activities where parents can learn together with their child. Parents welcome the increasing number of opportunities to engage with the school in person. This includes opportunities through the 'shared start and finishes' sessions, movie nights and the schools' Learning Festival. A minority of parents would like more regular and timely updates on their child's learning and progress.
- Members of the Parent Council are supportive of the school and raise funds very effectively for trips and activities. They appreciate the updates on the work of the school being provided at their meetings by the headteacher. The majority of parents would like their views taken more into account when the school staff make changes. The headteacher should increase the involvement of parents in school improvement by communicating and explaining priorities in a variety of formats.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- The school motto of 'It's all about the bairns' sits at the core of the school's work. All staff are caring and committed in trying to meet the wellbeing needs of all children, including the most vulnerable. Staff know the needs of children and their families well, often reaching out to support families at times of increased challenge. The majority of parents feel comfortable approaching staff with questions, suggestions or issues.
- Most staff and partners are proactive in promoting positive relationships. Most children say that staff treat them fairly and with respect. The majority of children are respectful of one another and of staff and other adults. A minority of children need to develop skills in listening well to others. At times, these children talk over others and disregard what they have been asked to do.
- Most children say that they feel safe at school, with almost all children saying that they have someone to speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Most children say that staff listen to their views, and the majority of children say that staff take these views into account.
- All members of the community are developing a shared understanding of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the language of wellbeing. Children across the school are involved in class activities linked to wellbeing and UNCRC. They are also learning about these areas through school assemblies. Staff have engaged in considerable professional learning to develop their understanding of the impact of important issues such as trauma on children's ability to learn. As a result, most staff interact with children with empathy and effectively adjust learning approaches.
- Children's wellbeing is supported appropriately through a range of PEF interventions. Staff provide identified groups of children with new and motivating experiences. This develops resilience, self-help, social skills and improves confidence levels. These skills are achieved in activities including swimming, cooking healthy meals, and using public transport to visit the local library and eat in a local restaurant. Children's wellbeing is also supported by the school's extensive outdoor spaces. Children use these spaces to enjoy PE. Most children say that they have lots of chances to get regular exercise.
- Staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities in relation to children. For example, they comply with national guidance in relation to attendance. Senior leaders and staff record individual children's attendance, and they plan interventions to improve attendance appropriately. This has resulted in improved attendance for a few children not attending school regularly. Senior leaders now need to develop improved systems across the school to record how they address specific attendance issues and other parental concerns. This will help them to be more targeted in adopting a range of strategies over time.

- Senior leaders and staff meet the needs of most children who require additional support with their learning. A few children have individualised plans that detail appropriately how they are supported. A next step for staff will be to ensure that the needs of all children who require additional support with their learning are addressed thoroughly. They should engage in additional planning for a few children and ensure that associated plans are targeted, reviewed regularly and make increased use of the views of children and parents. More structured parental involvement should help parents to understand more effectively how to support their child's learning at home.
- Senior leaders deploy pupil support assistants (PSAs) to support the needs of individual children. The PSAs work very well to try to meet these children's needs. However, senior leaders should consider how the skills and experience of PSAs could be used more effectively to support the needs of more learners. This may include staff working more regularly with different groups of children who require additional support with their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff engage well with a range of partners to support children's wellbeing, equality and inclusion. These partners include, for example, staff from the associated primary schools and local secondary school, staff from the social work department, an educational psychologist, and a speech and language therapist. This results in children who feel more confident about transitions to a new school and more able to communicate their needs.
- 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.
- The health and wellbeing curriculum supports children appropriately to become healthier and safer. Almost all children say staff teach them to lead a healthy lifestyle. Staff should continue to review the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure it addresses effectively important issues of ongoing interest to the children. For example, diversity, equality, and how to challenge discrimination. Staff should be responsive in amending this curriculum at times to target specific areas of concern, for example issues that surface through daily activities or discussion.

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 2022/23 shows that, overall, most children are achieving in line or just below expected national standards in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Most children who face barriers to learning are making good progress towards individual targets in literacy and numeracy.
- Senior leaders and teachers should develop further their engagement in moderation activities. This will develop further their confidence and accuracy in making professional judgements about children's levels of attainment and their understanding of national standards within the curriculum.

Attainment in literacy and English

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

Listening and talking

- The majority of children listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. A minority of children become disengaged when listening as a whole class. The majority of children who have recently achieved early and first level are confident to engage in discussions with adults. They enjoy talking about their everyday life events. A minority of children at these levels find it difficult to take turns. The majority of children working towards second level are eager to talk about their tasks. They can articulate their views, but sometimes do so at inappropriate times. Across the school, children require further support to ensure they participate effectively in group and class discussions. They need to develop their skills in listening and responding appropriately to their peers. Senior leaders should support teachers to strengthen their understanding of assessing children's listening and talking skills. This should increase the reliability of teacher's professional judgement in relation to children's progress and levels of attainment.

Reading

- The majority of children who have recently achieved early level recognise initial sounds and simple blends. They are building confidence in reading common words. Children who have recently achieved first level, talk confidently about the books they are reading. They explain their preferences for texts and authors. The majority of children read with increasing fluency and a few use expression well. Children at first level are not yet confident in answering inferential and evaluative questions about familiar texts. Children working towards second level talk confidently about favourite authors and give explanations about the types of books they enjoy. They are at the early stages of identifying techniques authors use to engage readers, for example, word choice and emotive language. Across the school, children should be given greater opportunities to read a range of texts including non-fiction.

Writing

- Children who have recently achieved early level can write at least one sentence independently and attempt to use knowledge of sounds to spell familiar words correctly. They would benefit from continued opportunities to write across a range of genres. By the end of first level, the majority of children write independently and can punctuate most sentences accurately. They are less confident in using a range of conjunctions to link sentences. Children working towards second level write for different purposes and confidently identify features of different genres, such as imaginative and persuasive writing. They link sentences using a range of conjunctions and use paragraphs well to separate thoughts and ideas. Children across first and second level need further opportunities to write extended pieces of writing.
- Across the school, children would benefit from teachers placing an increased focus on presentation and handwriting. Teachers need to adopt a whole school approach to support children in presenting their writing more clearly and legibly.

Numeracy and mathematics

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

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children can read and write numbers to 20 with a few children to 30. The majority of children can count back from 20. Most children can order numbers to 20 and the majority can recognise the missing numbers in a number line to 20. The majority of children are aware of how time relates to daily routines and can recognise o'clock. They need further practice in using appropriate language when discussing time. At first level, most children are confident in multiplying by 10 and 100 and the majority can identify the value of digits to 1,000. Most children can recognise coins and notes to £50. The majority of children can read digital and analogue time around o'clock, half past, quarter to and quarter past the hour. Children at first level need more opportunities to develop and use mental agility skills to calculate two-step problems. They need to revisit units of measurement to identify the correct measurement to use for length, weight and volume. At second level, most children can explain the link between a digit and its value to 1,000,000 and how to use zero as a placeholder. The majority of children can effectively use strategies to estimate and make calculations. They can round numbers to 10, 100 and 1,000. The majority can compare costs and determine affordability within a given budget. Children at second level require further practice in using fractions, decimals and percentages and calculating area and perimeter.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children at early level can name and describe properties of basic two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. The majority of children can use positional language such as 'above' and 'below' and 'forwards' but are less confident with 'left' and 'right'. At first level, the majority of children can identify right angles in the environment. The majority are aware of directional language such as clockwise, anticlockwise, left and right. Most know the basic properties of two-dimensional shapes but require more opportunities to identify more complex three-dimensional objects such as triangular prisms. Most children at second level can confidently identify and name a variety of properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. A minority can describe properties of a few different types of triangles. They need to revisit the use of scale when drawing and interpreting plans.

Information handling

- At early level, most children can sort materials into different groups. At first level, the majority of children can explain how to use tally marks to gather information and know what a bar chart is. At first level, a minority of children can describe ways that information can be displayed for

example, graphs and pictograms. They need further opportunities to identify the key features of a bar chart to help them interpret the data effectively. At second level, the majority of children can describe a variety of ways to display data. The majority of children can use the vocabulary associated with probability effectively to describe the likelihood of simple events.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders and teachers track the attainment and progress of children in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Current processes and systems do not yet provide a reliable and clear picture of individual children's attainment over time. Senior leaders need to review their systems to ensure rigour in analysing data for individuals, groups and cohorts. This should identify trends in children's progress and attainment over time.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The majority of children are involved in sports events or activities organised by Active Schools Scotland. This helps them to become more aware of how to be healthy and improve their fitness.
- A few children achieve leadership skills, such as responsibility and care for others, through supporting younger children. These children are playground buddies and peer mediators. A few children also achieve skills in performance and team-working. For example, by participating in school concerts and other events in the local community, including visits to a local care home.
- Senior leaders and staff celebrate children's successes and achievements during school assemblies. Children across the school receive certificates through 'BIG APE (Behaviour Is Great At Pitteuchar East) call-outs'. These call-outs recognise how children contribute well to the school. A few children say they value sharing their achievements from outwith school with staff and they enjoy receiving positive feedback.
- Senior leaders should build on systems to record children's achievements. These systems will help identify any children who are at risk of missing out on opportunities. Children would benefit from making links to skills for learning, life and work. This will help to ensure they see the value of their achievements and how they contribute to their learning.

Equity for all learners

- Staff engage with partners from St Andrew's University in a programme called 'First Chances'. This programme provides individualised support for children who may experience barriers to further or higher education, including children who are care experienced. This supports children's confidence and levels of resilience as they progress to secondary school.
- Senior leaders are using PEF in a targeted way to improve attendance in P1 and to improve children's engagement at the early level. They are also using it to provide additional staffing to support a few children from P1 to P4 who require additional support with their wellbeing. Senior leaders and staff should ensure that they carefully monitor the impact of PEF interventions on children's attainment. This will help them to track and determine how successful they have been in addressing the poverty-related attainment gap.

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.