

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Fillan's Primary School**

Glasgow City Council

22 August 2023

## Key contextual information

St Fillan's Primary School is a denominational school situated in the Cathcart area of Glasgow. At the time of inspection, 443 children attend the school over 16 classes. The headteacher has been in post for approximately five years. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises the headteacher, two deputy headteachers (DHT) and three Principal teachers.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. There were no exclusions from 2016/17 to 2020/21. In September 2021, 13% of children at P5 to P7 pupils were registered for free school meals. The school reported that 21.0% of pupils had additional support needs and that 7.6% of pupils live in 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland.

### 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

- St Fillan's Primary School has a welcoming, caring and respectful ethos. The well-respected headteacher is kind, compassionate and highly visible in and around the school. The headteacher is mindful of staff wellbeing and creates conditions which support positive and productive working relationships across the whole team. All staff work together very well and are developing a good understanding of their collective responsibility in securing school improvement.
- Senior leaders and staff know children, families and their local community very well. They foster positive relationships with parents, develop partnerships with the local community and work closely with their parish. Staff help children develop an understanding of what being part of a community means. Senior leaders and staff are aspirational in their vision for children, maintaining high standards and expectations of children's behaviour and work. Staff encourage children to be polite, well-mannered and respectful. As a result, children experience positive relationships with staff and with each other. Staff encourage children to do their best and to embrace opportunities, in line with the school motto and aims.
- The recently reviewed school values reflect Gospel Values and are founded in the Catholic faith. Children are very familiar with the school motto, 'Love for learning, love for life' which is displayed in classes and around the building. Children talk about what this means to them. They are less confident in talking about the school values and how these are reflected in their learning and the wider life of the school. Senior leaders and staff should ensure there are opportunities to make more explicit links between the values and key areas of learning, for example, the work on children's rights and promotion of pupil participation.
- Senior leaders have a clear quality assurance calendar in place which they use to monitor the work of the school and gather the views of children, parents and staff. This supports senior leaders in the self-evaluation process. Most staff and the majority of parents feel senior leaders take their views into account when planning and implementing change. Senior leaders should

ensure they use all available data to identify and inform improvement priorities. This would make strategic planning for continuous improvement more effective and provide greater clarity in identifying improvement priorities. Senior leaders should maintain a consistent focus on clear, measurable outcomes for children to demonstrate more easily the impact of improvement priorities.

- Senior leaders have an increased focus on supporting leadership at all levels. Senior leaders readily engage in professional learning and opportunities to develop networks across the local authority. Teachers are encouraged, supported and empowered to take a leading role on aspects of the school improvement plan. They are involved in working groups, and implement change, linked to current improvement priorities. Senior leaders plan the collegiate calendar well to facilitate teachers' leadership and protect time for working groups to develop and implement change. This calendar helps maintain an appropriate pace for managing change. All staff feel empowered, and welcome opportunities to be involved in whole school improvement linked to their strengths and interests. They undertake relevant professional learning and engage with research to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills further. This is helping to secure improvement, for example, in improving learning and teaching and children's outcomes in science and writing.
- Children have a range of opportunities to lead within the school. These include whole-school leadership groups such as the Laudato Si Group, the Rights Respecting Schools Group and the Health and Wellbeing Committee. Children in the senior school also take on leadership roles with additional responsibility such as digital leaders, sports captains and playground buddies. Children directly involved in these opportunities develop a range of useful leadership skills. Staff should consider how all children can develop further these skills.
- Recently, a small group of children took part in the Young Leaders of Learning programme. This involved children visiting another school to share practice and ideas. Senior leaders recognise the potential this programme has to involve children directly in self-evaluation, identifying areas for improvement and leading change. As planned, senior leaders should engage with 'How Good is OUR School?' (2018) to increase pupil participation. This would enable children to have more influence in decision making across the school and in their learning.
- Senior leaders use most of the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) for additional staffing to provide both universal and targeted support, and interventions in literacy and numeracy. Working closely with staff, the headteacher should continue to develop a clear strategy for how PEF is closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

## 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

- Children benefit from nurturing relationships with all staff across the school. This creates a positive learning environment. Almost all children are eager and motivated to learn and succeed, and speak positively about their learning and their school. They are polite and welcoming to visitors to the school. Almost all children work together effectively when in pairs and groups and support each other successfully. They listen well to instructions and are respectful of the views of others. Teachers' high-quality displays of children's work in classes and across the school showcase children's achievements and progress.
- In lessons where learning and teaching is particularly effective children are motivated and experience learning that is relevant, challenging and collaborative. In a significant number of lessons, learning is overly teacher-led. Teachers now need to provide opportunities for children to take more responsibility for independent learning during lessons. This will enable children to make choices about what and how they learn.
- Teachers use digital technology effectively across the school to enhance children's learning experiences. Children confidently use a variety of digital tools independently such as apps, tablets and programmable toys. Digital leaders enhance and share their skills with other children well. Teachers now need to continue to enhance their digital skills to support and enhance children's learning.
- In almost all classes, teachers share with children what they will learn and how they know if they have been successful. This helps children to understand the purpose of their learning and make links with prior knowledge. Teachers need to continue to develop this approach and to ensure they use language that children understand. In most lessons teachers use questioning effectively to check for understanding. They should now ensure that questioning is consistently used to extend and deepen learning. In most lessons, plenary sessions enable children to reflect effectively on their learning.
- Teachers plan tasks and activities which are well matched to the needs of most children. Differentiation is evident in most literacy and numeracy lessons. Across the school, children would benefit from greater challenge in depth and application of their learning.
- Children have useful opportunities to self- and peer-assess their work during lessons. Teachers should continue to develop children's skills in assessing their own work and that of others. This will support children to have a fuller understanding of their learning and their individual next steps. Teachers should continue to provide children with opportunities to assess their own work and the work of others in a meaningful way to ensure feedback leads to clear next steps in learning.

- In most classes, teachers provide effective, timely feedback to support children's learning. Children talk positively about how this helps them to improve. All children should be given the opportunity to create and review learning targets regularly. This will help children reflect on the progress they are making and be clear about what they need to do to progress. Teachers should discuss targets with children and help them reflect more deeply about the skills they are developing. These reflections will help children set realistic and aspirational, individual targets.
- Children enjoy high quality learning experiences in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The well-planned approach promotes inquiry based, experiential and challenging learning and reflects the needs and interests of the learners. Children use scientific language appropriately, write scientific reports and make hypotheses. This effective practice should be shared across the school.
- Teachers in the early years have made a positive start to working more closely with practitioners in the nursery. This is leading to changes in their approaches to playful pedagogy and the learning environment in P1. Teachers should continue to develop the quality of experiences, spaces, and interactions in P1 to strengthen their understanding of learning through play and the role of the adult in the learning environment. Staff across the early level should continue to work together to ensure children build on the very positive learning experiences they have in nursery. Teachers should ensure children's experiences reflect their interests, aspirations and curiosity.
- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches to measure children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. They make sound professional judgements of children's level of attainment based on a range of evidence including summative, formative and standardised assessments. Teachers plan for assessment of learning as part of their planning procedures and use their collegiate time to moderate learning across levels. Teachers now need to develop their use of high-quality assessment to enable children to apply their learning across the curriculum and in different contexts.
- Teachers plan learning for literacy, numeracy, science and health and wellbeing, regularly and over different timescales. They work closely with their stage partners to ensure children have similar learning experiences, including through interdisciplinary learning. There is scope for teachers to ensure planning is flexible and adapts according to teacher's ongoing evaluations of children's progress. Teachers monitor children's progress in learning, however, are not yet able to measure effectively the impact of targeted interventions for children. Senior leaders have an overview of children's progress across core curricular areas. They should now extend this to include other areas of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and teachers should develop the school's approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should work together to develop a coherent and streamlined framework to clarify what high-quality learning, teaching and assessment looks like. This will support all staff develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders are reviewing the curriculum. They have consulted with staff, children and parents. As planned, senior leaders should ensure the refreshed curriculum rationale reflects the unique school context and takes account of children's interests and aspirations. Senior leaders and teachers need to ensure that children experience their entitlement to a broad general education, which allows breadth, depth and application of learning.
- All children benefit from a well-planned STEM curriculum that is creative, motivating and aligned to children's aspirations. Teachers should ensure that they use curriculum progression pathways effectively across all curricular areas to develop children's skills more broadly.
- All children receive their entitlement to religious education and religious observance. Children in upper primary classes are working towards the Pope Francis Faith Award and are part of a Laudato Si promoting global citizenship and learning for sustainability programme. Senior leaders should ensure all children receive their full entitlement of high-quality physical education and there is a planned progression of skills. Teaching of modern languages should also be reviewed to ensure that teachers are fulfilling the 1+2 language requirement.
- Teachers recognise the importance of linking learning to the world of work. Partnership working is resuming, following COVID-19 mitigations, to provide children with skills for learning, life and work. For example, supported by Queens Park Football Club, children have designed a football stadium digitally. Parents also contribute to their children's learning by sharing some of their experiences in the workplace.
- Staff encourage all children to join the local library and have created library areas in the classrooms to encourage children to read for pleasure. Teachers arrange visits to the library and authors to visit classes. At early and first level, parents read to children in school. These initiatives are having a positive impact on children's interest in reading.
- Staff work well across the school, to provide appropriate experiences at transitions from stage to stage as well as from nursery to P1 and P7 to secondary school. This results in children settling well into their new setting. Older children enjoy supporting these successful transitions through a buddy system.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents work well with the school to create links with local businesses and provide additional resources and experiences for children. For example, ‘traffic buddies’ were purchased to increase children’s safety travelling to and from school. Parents organise social and fundraising events, which promote increased parental involvement in the life of the school. The Parent Council is keen to increase membership to ensure all family communities are represented and involved in a broader range of activities. This includes contributing to discussions around the school improvement priorities.
- Most parents value the regular communication through weekly newsletters, social media and learning conversations provided by the school. This helps keep them informed of events and other information relating to their child’s education.
- Parents appreciate the recent family learning sessions and parent workshops. All participating parents feel that the workshops had a positive impact on their child. Parents comment on the effective transitions between the nursery and school. Older children enjoy supporting these successful transitions through a buddy system and leading induction workshops for new parents.

## 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

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

- There is a warm and positive culture across the school. Children are happy and feel valued. The headteacher has high expectations of all children and models a caring and respectful approach very well. Almost all children feel safe and cared for. Staff know children and families very well and have a good understanding of the social and cultural context of the school. Staff and children are proud of their school and enjoy being part of the school community. Children have a strong sense of belonging and almost all feel they are treated with respect.
- Children bring a rich breadth of knowledge and skills to school from their own family lives. Staff have high expectations for all learners and classes are quiet and calm. Children are taught about the wellbeing indicators through class activities and assemblies. Children would benefit from being supported to develop their understanding of the wellbeing indicators further and what they mean for them.
- Children learn to be healthy from the early stages, they practice regular exercise and experience a variety of sporting activities both in and out of school. This is enabling children to learn about their skills and to develop confidence in sport and fitness. Staff should now support children to track the improvements in their health over time from activities such as the daily run. The 'Active schools' coordinator tracks and monitors the participation in school clubs to identify which children might be missing out. Staff should now monitor participation in other out of class activities to ensure all children have the opportunity to take part and experience new skills.
- Children talk about how to keep themselves safe and learn about many aspects of safety through for example, pupil led assemblies. The school has a rich variety of partners who work very well with staff to support children in their health and wellbeing. A minority of children show trust and openness with unknown adults. There is scope to empower children further to take responsibility and be more involved in important decisions across the school.
- Teachers plan the health and wellbeing curriculum using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Children at different stages learn about aspects of health. For example, they talk about how to have a healthy diet. Senior leaders should now ensure there is a whole school overview of health and wellbeing which is planned with children. This should be more meaningful, relevant and progressive across stages and take appropriate account of the school context.
- Children show respect to each other and to staff. A few children feel others do not treat them as well as they would like. Teachers help children to feel they belong and are valued by modelling a patient and caring approach, especially when challenges arise. Children in the upper stages are learning to take responsibility and demonstrate empathy through various leadership groups, such as buddies, ambassadors and the Eco-Schools group work. Staff should now

ensure all children are more involved in aspects of school decision making and taking responsibility. This will further support children's sense of achievement and success.

- Senior leaders follow the local authority staged intervention process with appropriate individual education plans for children as required. These plans are developed through consultation with professional partners, such as the Visual Impairment Team and the Educational Psychology Service, and parents. Where appropriate, individual targets should reflect social, emotional and relationship barriers, as well as specific educational targets. A few children have individual support plans and are supported by specific staff, often outwith the classroom. It is important that all children are appropriately included within the classroom setting for almost all their learning. This will help to ensure they feel included and involved and are not missing out. All teachers should have a clear understanding of the specific supports required for children at stages one and two and should monitor children's progress carefully.
- Children in early stages are building their understanding of fairness and teachers support equality and turn taking daily. Children in the upper stages have a developing sense of fairness and justice. Children learn about kindness and fairness through religious education and this is supporting their understanding of equality. The relationships policy now needs to include the views of children and should be shared and communicated in child friendly language. Children should contribute to plans and decisions relating to all areas of school that affect them, for example the anti-bullying and equalities plans. This will ensure that children are empowered to make a real and visible difference to their school.
- Children come from many diverse backgrounds which staff recognise and celebrate. As a result, children learn about tolerance and respect for people from different cultures. Events such as cultural diversity week and celebration of world religions form part of the school calendar. Parents and others in the community support these events well. This helps children understand and talk about tolerance and respect as well as equality and fairness.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Children's progress at the early and first level in literacy and numeracy is good but very good at second level. Overall children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good and is consistently above local authority and national averages.
- At early, first and second level almost all children attained nationally expected CfE levels in listening and talking. At all levels most children achieved nationally expected levels in reading and writing. Almost all children at early level, and most at first and second attained nationally expected CfE levels in numeracy. A few children exceed national expectations in both literacy and numeracy. A few children benefit from targeted interventions in order to reduce identified gaps in learning. Overall, children with additional support needs make good progress from prior levels of attainment.
- Teachers use a range of internal and external assessments to support their professional judgement of achievement of a CfE level. This, together with a wide range of moderation activities undertaken regularly, is leading to robust and reliable professional judgements. School leaders and teachers are continuing to extend the use of data, and opportunities for moderation, in order to better inform specific areas for improvement.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

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

#### Listening and talking

- At early level almost all children listen attentively to adults and follow directions well. They communicate effectively with each other and take turns to contribute their ideas and opinions in small groups. By first level almost all children ask and answer questions with confidence. They listen for information and recall key facts. They are attentive to others. By second level most children are highly articulate. They talk with confidence and expression. They demonstrate a high level of interest and enthusiasm when conversing with known adults and children. Across all levels, children should continue to have opportunities to apply their talking and listening skills in a range of contexts.

#### Reading

- At early level most children recognise, say and write taught sounds. They read familiar texts with accuracy and use their knowledge of sounds to decode unknown words. They answer questions about a text and retell a story. By the end of first level most children read familiar texts with fluency and expression and decode unknown words. They discuss the main ideas within a text. By second level most children show enthusiasm for reading. They read an appropriate range of texts and summarise these stories well. Most children answer literal and

inferential questions well. They would now benefit from opportunities to develop their reading skills beyond the structure of the collaborative reading approach.

## **Writing**

- At early level most children form letters correctly and write simple sentences. They retell a story with pictures and sentences. By first level most children write well for a range of purposes and effectively use adjectives, conjunctions and a range of punctuation. By second level most children write well across a wide range of genres. They use punctuation and paragraphs well to enhance their writing. They select relevant information from a range of sources and use a range of techniques to engage the reader. In writing, children should explore a wider range of texts, for example using digital technologies such as blogs or emails.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

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

## **Number, money and measure**

- Almost all children at early level work confidently with numbers to 20. Most children copy and repeat patterns and the majority create their own patterns well. Most children at first level have a good understanding of place value. They solve two step problems and three-digit addition and subtraction problems using a range of strategies. Children at second level solve simple algebraic problems. They solve problems involving perimeter and area within real life contexts. Across the school, children are not yet confident in using decimals, percentages and fractions at an age-appropriate level.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Most children at early level recognise, describe and sort two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They create a range of symmetrical patterns, for example colourful butterflies. By first level children calculate the perimeter of simple two-dimensional shapes but lack confidence in finding right angles in the environment and in well-known two-dimensional shapes. Most children, at second level, understand that not all parts of the three-dimensional object can be seen when calculating the area of it.

## **Information handling**

- Across the school, children undertake surveys and display and interpret information in a range of ways. At early level, children sort objects of different shapes, sizes and colours in different ways. At first level, children ask and answer questions on, for example pets and sandwich fillings, and display their findings in bar graphs and pictograms. At second level, children display data in a range of ways. Overall, children need more opportunities to develop these skills including through digital technology.

## **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders and staff implemented a range of strategies to raise attainment in writing, numeracy and mathematics. School data indicates that the school has raised attainment for the majority of children in P1 – P7 as they move through the school in literacy and numeracy over the past three years.
- Currently teachers track and monitor attainment in literacy, numeracy and in science across the school. Teachers discuss this progress with senior leaders three times per year using a fact, story, action approach. This enables staff to identify which children require additional challenge in their learning and which require additional support. There is a need to streamline these processes to enable staff to track and monitor more effectively the progress of all children, individually, or in groups, including those with additional support needs. This should extend to all curricular areas.

## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Senior leaders and staff recognise and celebrate achievements well in a variety of ways such as 'celebrating success assemblies', displays in classrooms and corridors and through school newsletters. Children are encouraged to let staff know of any achievements outwith school. Children take pride in demonstrating their skills and talents, such as gymnastics, music and reading poetry at assemblies. In P6 and P7, children relish the opportunities to be playground buddies supporting younger children well in the playground. This is helping improve their own confidence and gain an award for volunteering. Older children recognise, as House or Sport Captains, they have positions of responsibility in the school. There are significant opportunities to develop these roles further, giving children more of a voice in their school.
- Teachers track children's achievements in pupil profile and assessment folders. Senior leaders should now develop an overview of all children's achievements to ensure that they are able to identify those at risk of missing out from these valuable experiences. In doing so, senior leaders will be better able to target activities in school to identified children. Additionally, children should be encouraged to consider the skills they are developing by taking part in these activities. This should help children apply these skills in different contexts and understand how these contribute to them becoming more confident, responsible and effective members of their school community.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff understand the socio-economic context of their school community well. The use of PEF to provide targeted interventions to literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on children's progress. Senior leaders are aware of the need to evaluate more closely the impact of these interventions on the attainment of individuals and cohorts of children. This will help them to understand how well they are closing the attainment gap caused by children's socio-economic circumstances.
- Staff organise support sensitively to ensure that financial cost is not a barrier to children's engagement in activities in or out of school. They support families at pressure points in the year. For example, through setting up the 'giving gate' at Christmas time. Senior leaders and staff, while mindful of the cost of the school day, should consider how financial pressures on families through frequent fundraising efforts might be reduced further. They need to ensure they use the range of information and data available to address any barriers to opportunity, participation and success for all children.

## Other relevant information

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.