# Summarised inspection findings

## Kirkmichael Primary School

Perth and Kinross Council

19 November 2024

# Key contextual information

Kirkmichael Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the village of Kirkmichael. It serves the rural communities of Kirkmichael, Glenshee, Bridge of Cally, Blacklunans and Straloch. The school roll is 33 children arranged across two multi-stage classes. The headteacher has been in post for six years. There is one full time equivalent (FTE) principal teacher who is class committed for 0.8 FTE. The principal teacher took up post in December 2023. There is one FTE class teacher.

There are 97.8% of children living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile six.

Kirkmichael Primary School Nursery 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.

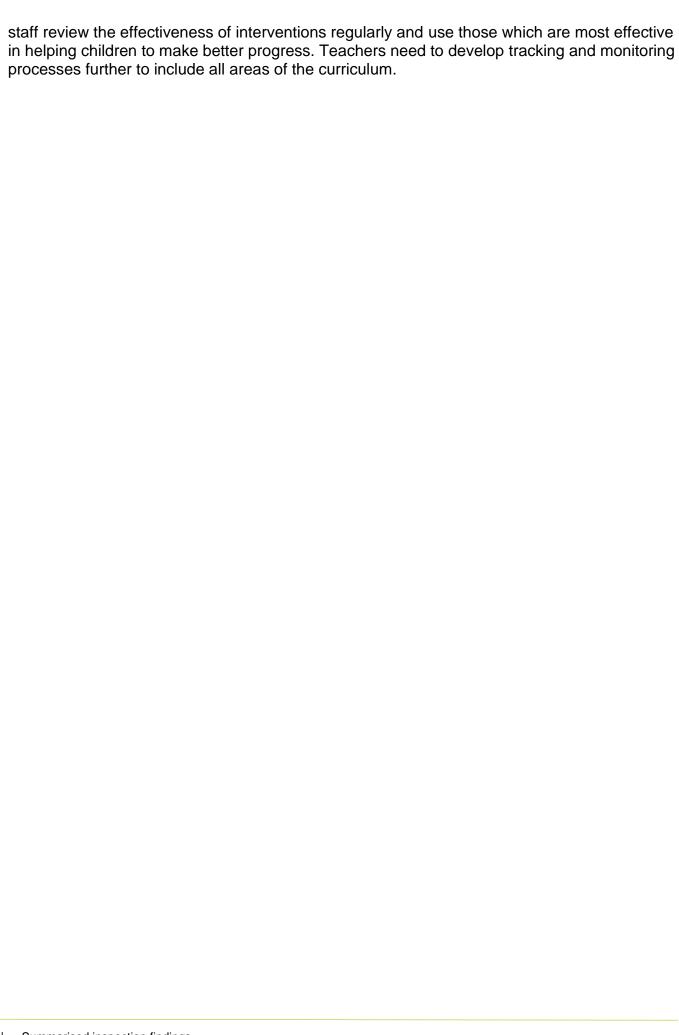| 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment | good |
|---|---|
| This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and  achievements. The themes are:<br><br>■ learning and engagement<br>■ quality of teaching<br>■ effective use of assessment<br>■ planning, tracking and monitoring | |

■ Across the school, all staff have developed a positive and welcoming ethos which is underpinned by a strong focus on children's rights. Almost all children demonstrate very well the school values of respectful, included and achieving in their actions throughout the school day. There are warm, nurturing relationships between all staff and children and between children. Across the school, children and staff worked together successfully to develop classroom and playground charters which are closely linked to children's rights. This helps almost all children to know, understand and demonstrate the high standards of behaviour expected. All children benefit from learning about feelings and emotions and almost all children use strategies to cope with challenging emotions successfully. A few children are supported very effectively by staff who have developed clear plans to help children to regulate their behaviour and feelings. As a result, almost all children behave well almost all of the time.

■ In all lessons, most children are highly motived and engage fully in their learning. Teachers provide learning activities which meet the needs of most children in most lessons. A few children would benefit from greater challenge in learning activities. In all lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. They share the purpose of learning with children in most lessons. This helps the majority of children to understand and explain the purpose of their learning well. In almost all lessons, teachers help children to understand how they will know if they have been successful in their learning. Children create criteria for success in learning skilfully with their teacher in most lessons. All children benefit from and enjoy regular opportunities to work individually or in pairs and groups, indoors and outside. Most children engage fully in such activities and are highly motivated by opportunities for collaborative working. In the majority of lessons, teachers use a range of questioning techniques. Most older children use higher order thinking skills very successfully to answer questions which require

them to explain their thinking. All teachers provide a range of verbal and written feedback to children about the quality of their work. Older children use this feedback effectively to help them to improve their work and achieve next steps.

■ All children use digital technology regularly to enhance and display their learning. For example, younger children use digital tablets successfully to record and display their learning. Older children use online digital applications skilfully to produce visuals to support presentations to their peers. Teachers make effective use of interactive boards to enhance their teaching. A few children who require additional support make very effective use of assistive technology to support their writing. They talk with confidence about the benefits of assistive technology and how it is helping them to improve their writing and be more confident as they write.

■ Teachers are beginning to use learning through play at the early stages. They have engaged in professional learning about play and used national practice guidance to help them create an attractive classroom environment for play and learning. Most children at the early stages are developing their curiosity and creativity as they play with a range of child-led and adult-initiated activities. Teachers should continue to develop a balance of the range of adult-initiated, child-led and direct teaching activities throughout the day. They need to help children to be clear about what they are learning and the skills they develop as they play. This should help children to make better use of learned skills in their child-initiated activities.

■ All teachers use a range of standardised and diagnostic assessments, including National Standardised Assessments, throughout the year. This helps them to gather reliable and robust evidence of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They use this data effectively to help them identify gaps in children's learning and plan appropriate support. Teachers do not yet plan regular assessments which allow children to demonstrate and use their skills and knowledge in a range of relevant contexts. As a next step, teachers need to develop a whole school assessment framework. They need to plan assessment as an integral part of the planning of learning process. Teachers should develop a range of rich assessments to inform them of children's attainment and progress more fully. This should help them to gather a wider range of data about children's progress across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers have engaged recently in a moderation activity of French with colleagues in the local management group. Senior leaders need to make moderation across the curriculum a regular feature of the work of the school, within and out with the school. This should help teachers to develop further a shared understanding of national standards across the curriculum.

■ All teachers use progression planners linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes in almost all curricular areas to plan children's learning in the long-, medium- and short-term. In a few areas of the curriculum, teachers ask children what they already know and what they would like to learn next to help plan learning. Teachers and the wider staff team consider their local area and contexts for learning when planning learning across the curriculum. This supports almost all children to experience a broad range of learning experiences which are motivating and relevant to the context of the school. Teachers and pupil support workers work very effectively together to carefully plan and deliver appropriate interventions for children who require additional support. Pupil support workers have engaged with a wide range of relevant professional learning about specific support interventions. They deliver learning skilfully and with confidence which meets the needs of children who require support.

■ Senior leaders and teachers meet termly to track and monitor children's attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy. Together, they identify children who have gaps in their learning, are not making appropriate progress or require additional support for learning. They plan a range of targeted interventions to support these children within and out with class. All

staff review the effectiveness of interventions regularly and use those which are most effective in helping children to make better progress. Teachers need to develop tracking and monitoring processes further to include all areas of the curriculum.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

■ The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

| **3.2 Raising attainment and achievement** | **good** |
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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

- Due to the small size of the school roll and the risk of identifying individual children, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.

- Across the school, attainment is good. Overall, most children achieve expected CfE levels in numeracy and in all aspects of literacy and English. Most children who require additional support make good progress against their individual targets.

## Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, most children make good progress in all aspects of literacy and English.

## Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children talk with confidence to adults and other children about their experiences. Most children listen and talk respectfully with their peers and adults. They make effective use of body language, gesture and eye contact to help them engage with others. Most younger children follow simple instructions well. Older children describe confidently the difference between a fact and an opinion. They build on the ideas of others effectively in conversation to extend the discussion. Across the school, a minority of children need to improve their skills in turn-taking during discussion.

## Reading

- Most younger children hear rhyme and suggest words which will rhyme with a given word. They answer simple questions about events in a text. Most younger children use decoding skills well, such as blending, and context clues, to help them read words they are less sure of. Most younger children read from left to right and top to bottom. Most older children confidently talk about stories and authors and explain with confidence their preference for a genre or author. Most older children answer a range of literal and inferential questions about texts well. Younger children need to develop their fluency as they read. Older children need to develop their skills in using expression in their reading. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular reading aloud in class.

## Writing

- Last session, older children participated in a national project to help raise attainment in writing. This resulted in significant improvement in writing attainment at first level. Teachers continue to develop this pedagogy to support raising attainment in writing across the school. This is helping most older children to understand and articulate how they can improve their writing and use their skills to do so.

- All younger children need more regular opportunities to practise their mark making and early writing skills in a wider range of experiences, including through their play. Most younger children form most lowercase letters legibly. They leave a space between words when writing and write words from left to right. Most younger children attempt to use a capital letter and a full stop in at least one sentence. Almost all older children make effective use of connecting words to extend sentences. They use a wide range of vocabulary to open sentences and order a recount text in chronological order. Most older children punctuate most sentences accurately appropriate to their age and stage. For example, they use capital letters, full stops, question marks and exclamation marks. Older children write recount experiences well and write imaginative stories and descriptions of topic work. They do not have recent experience of writing persuasive text or poetry. A few children who require support for learning make good use of assistive technology in laptop computers to help them write an extended piece of writing. Across the school, all children need to regularly write in a range of genre throughout the year. A few children need to improve their presentation and handwriting.

## Numeracy and mathematics

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

## Number, money and measure

- Most younger children order numbers correctly to 20. They add successfully within 10 and 20. They need to develop their skills in subtracting successfully within 20. Most younger children require further support to calculate doubles of numbers. Most younger children use an analogue clock face accurately to identify o'clock and half past times. Appropriate to their age and stage, children confidently recognise and write three-digit numbers and understand the link between a digit and its value. Most older children accurately double numbers within 100 and explain the strategies they have used. They require further support to estimate and round problem-solving questions. Most children are confident using money and calculating change appropriately to their age and stage. Children at the middle stages are confident telling the time, using digital and analogue clocks. Most older children demonstrate accurate mental agility. They use different strategies to check estimation but need to apply these skills better to solve complex word problems Most older children enjoy using multiplication and negative numbers but are less confident using fractions, decimals and percentages.

## Shape, position and movement

- Younger children name two-dimensional (2D) shapes, using the correct language to describe their properties. They identify three-dimensional (3D) objects in the environment. Younger children create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. They use positional language such as in front, behind, in between, above and below accurately. Older children identify and discuss a wide range of angles. They are confident discussing the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Older children should now develop their knowledge of area, perimeter, circumference and diameter.

## Information handling

- Younger children are confident interpreting simple bar charts and using counting skills to interpret charts. Most children discuss different types of graphs and charts and interpret accurate information from different graphs appropriate to their age and stage. Older children identify different ways to display data and draw and label their own graphs. Across all stages, children should continue to develop their skills in displaying information, particularly using digital technology.

**Attainment over time**

■ Given the very small school roll and changing cohorts of children each year, attainment over time is varied. As most children progress through the school, their attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Overall, most children are supported well to make good progress over time in literacy and numeracy from their prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders and teachers meet regularly to track and monitor children's progress in all aspects of literacy and numeracy. Together they identify gaps in children's learning and provide targeted support to close the gaps. Staff do not yet assess children's knowledge and understanding robustly across all curriculum areas. Nor do they track and monitor children's progress across all curriculum areas. They need to do so to help them to gather data about children's attainment and progress across the curriculum.

■ Attendance is above the national average. Currently children's attendance across the school is 96.5%. There are robust procedures in place to ensure children's safety if they are absent from school. Persistent absence of 10% or more by individual children is not an issue in the school. Senior leaders work with parents to develop clear plans which is improving the attendance of a few children.

**Overall quality of learners' achievements**

■ All children are encouraged to share their views on the life and work of the school, within and out with the school. They have a strong sense of belonging to the wider community. They participate well in school leadership groups, such as groups to develop children's rights and awareness of eco issues. The school community has achieved national accreditation for its work in digital technology, eco awareness and children's rights. Most children talk about these achievements with confidence and are rightly proud of them.

■ Children engage in a wide range of activities in and out of school throughout the year, such as skiing for older children and community visits for all. This helps children to develop their confidence and skills in a wide range of contexts outside the classroom.

■ Staff and children celebrate children's achievements in displays, the whole school achievement folder and at assembly. All children have individual wider achievement folders which they add to as they progress through the school. Children identify achievements they have had at home, what they found challenging and a few skills they are developing. They record this successfully in their wider achievement folder and enjoy sharing the folders with adults. Teachers should develop and use a skills progression framework. This should help them ensure children develop their skills progressively as they progress through the school. Teachers need to track and monitor children's achievements robustly and identify consistently the skills children are developing.

**Equity for all learners**

■ All staff have a good understanding of the socio-economic circumstances of their children and families. Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to enhance staffing to support children who require support with their learning to help raise attainment and close attainment gaps. As a result of these interventions, most children make good progress in their learning and achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders are at the very early stages of identifying gaps in attainment between specific cohorts of children. They need to closely track how effectively they are accelerating progress towards closing gaps between such cohorts.

■ Senior leaders access the Parent Council fund discreetly for a few children to support individual family circumstances. The Parent Council subsidise the cost of school trips and in school workshop experiences, such as a science workshop. This helps staff to ensure that no child misses out due to individual circumstances.

## Other relevant evidence

■ All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education each week. They experience physical education outdoors regularly. Teachers plan learning which builds on children's skills and is motivating and challenging.

■ All children experience their entitlement to 1+2 modern languages. They learn aspects of Gaelic and French vocabulary. Teachers need to develop progression frameworks for these languages to ensure children build upon their prior learning.

■ Senior leaders consult all parents and staff to help them determine PEF spend. They need to ensure they ask all children for their views on how PEF should be spent.

■ Younger children have regular opportunities to select books to read for enjoyment from their class library. The school library has been recently refurbished, and children welcomed the opportunity to visit recently and select a book each to read for enjoyment.

# Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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| 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.