

Summarised inspection findings

Lilliesleaf Primary School

Scottish Borders Council

27 February 2024

Key contextual information

Lilliesleaf Primary School and Nursery Class serve the rural villages of Lilliesleaf and Midlem and surrounding area. The primary school opened in 1962 and the building was extended several times between 1992 and 1997. The nursery class was added in 1998. A new nursery class extension was opened in 2023. The school roll is 49 children across three multi-composite classes. In September 2022, 80.4% of children lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile eight with the remainder living in deciles four to seven. During session 2022 / 2023, the substantive headteacher left the school. An acting headteacher was in place for a short period of time, followed by a second acting headteacher. The second acting headteacher took up post in April 2023. He was subsequently appointed substantive headteacher in January 2024. The headteacher has overall responsibility for the nursery class in the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- All staff create a welcoming and nurturing learning environment for all children. Staff have a strong understanding of the school's context and know children and their families well. This supports them to create a calm and caring ethos. Almost all children are well-mannered and keen to learn. They are friendly towards visitors and proud of their school. Relationships between adults and children, and among children, are positive and respectful.
- Teachers and children in all classes have developed class charters linked to children's rights and the school values. Children can identify their rights and successfully give examples of what these mean and how they are relevant to their own lives.
- Most children engage effectively in their learning activities which are linked well to their interests. In literacy and mathematics, teachers match learning activities well to children's needs. Teachers now need to ensure that learning across the curriculum is planned at the right level of difficulty. A few children would benefit from more challenge in their learning. Most children work successfully, independently, in pairs and in groups.
- Staff use the extensive school grounds regularly to consolidate children's learning across the curriculum. Teachers engage effectively with partners to develop their skills in delivering outdoor learning. Children use their creativity and prior learning successfully as they learn outdoors and develop their understanding of the natural world. For example, children in P1-3 use their knowledge of properties of materials well to build dens for shelter outdoors.
- Older children have the opportunity to contribute to the life of the school through their leadership opportunities as junior road safety officers and house captains. They are developing their skills of leadership, communication and team work effectively through these roles.

Teachers should identify leadership opportunities for all children to develop their skills for learning, life and work.

- Teachers use digital technology effectively as a key tool to support learning and teaching. Most children use digital tablets daily to access and record learning. Children at the middle stages of the school are developing their coding skills well using programmable toys. Younger children need to develop further their skills in using a wider range of digital technologies. Children share their learning regularly with their families via an online application.
- Children in P1-3 are beginning to enhance their learning through play. Staff have developed a learning environment where children are beginning to develop their skills in curiosity, creativity and enquiry as they play and learn. Staff should continue to engage with national guidance to further develop their skills in interactions with children which extend and enhance children's learning.
- The headteacher, in collaboration with staff, parents and children, has recently introduced Lilliesleaf Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework. This is helping teachers to develop a shared understanding of the key features of high-quality learning and teaching. Teachers use this tool to evaluate their practice and identify key areas for improvement. They set clear targets and engage with appropriate professional learning to improve their practice. Recent quality assurance reviews of learning and teaching shows teachers are improving their practice in targeted areas since previous evaluations.
- In almost all lessons, teachers recap previous learning well and share the purpose of lessons effectively with children. They share with children how they will know if they have been successful in their writing. They should develop this further to help children to identify what success in their individual learning would look like across all curriculum areas. This would help children talk more confidently about their learning and identify more effectively what they need to do to improve. Teachers give clear instructions and use effective questioning to check for understanding and extend children's learning. Most children use higher order thinking skills well to explain their thinking and justify their opinions. Teachers need to give children more opportunities to lead their own learning.
- In all classes, teachers use verbal feedback effectively to support children to improve their work. Teachers should review the quality of written feedback given to children to ensure it clearly identifies what children have done well and what they need to do next to improve further. This will support all children to understand their next steps more clearly.
- Teachers use well a range of standardised assessments, including Scottish National Standardised Assessment, and observations of children's classwork in literacy and numeracy to assess children's progress and attainment. They use data gathered from these assessments effectively to make accurate professional judgements about children's learning and progress and plan next steps in children's learning. Most children assess their own writing and that of their peers regularly using agreed success criteria. Teachers need to support children to develop their skills in self and peer assessment across the curriculum. Teachers need to plan for regular assessment of children's use of their skills in new and relevant contexts. Teachers moderate their judgements about children's achievement of a level with the headteacher through discussion at tracking and monitoring meetings. As planned, teachers should engage in moderation activities with each other in school and with colleagues from other schools.
- Teachers plan clearly an overview of children's learning across the year. They use clear progression pathways well to plan learning in all areas of the curriculum for each term. This ensures that children build effectively on their learning as they move through the school. Teachers and children work well together when planning new contexts for learning to ensure

learning is relevant, interesting and builds on children's previous knowledge and understanding. Teachers help children to identify what they already know and what they would like to learn next to develop their knowledge and skills further. Teachers use this information effectively to plan cross curricular learning for all children.

- The headteacher and teachers engage effectively in termly tracking and monitoring meetings to review the attainment and progress of every child across the school. Children identified with gaps in their learning receive regular targeted support from classroom assistants and teachers. This is helping to close gaps in children's knowledge and improve their progress in literacy and numeracy. All teachers need to further develop how they record the progress children are making through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels across all curriculum areas.

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

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, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- In session 2022/2023, most children achieved expected CfE levels of attainment in reading and talking and listening. The majority of children achieved expected CfE levels in writing and numeracy. The school has accelerated children's progress in writing and numeracy and predicted attainment for session 2023 / 2024 shows that most children are making good progress and are now on track to achieve expected CfE levels in reading, talking and listening and numeracy. The majority of children are making good progress in writing. All children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress with their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children are making good progress in listening and talking and reading. The majority of children are making good progress in writing.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children confidently talk to adults to explain their experiences, likes and dislikes. Younger children identify rhyming words and follow simple instructions well. Older children share and justify their ideas and opinions successfully. Across the school, almost all children need to develop their skills in turn taking when speaking in whole class and group situations. They need to show greater respect for others who are talking by listening carefully and giving them time to complete what they are saying.

Reading

- Younger children explain confidently the role of the author and the illustrator of a text. They predict successfully what will happen next in a story. They are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds and letter patterns to read unfamiliar words. Older children identify a range of authors and types of text they like to read. They answer with confidence literal and inferential questions about texts they are reading. Across the school, children need to improve their skills in reading aloud with fluency and expression appropriate to their age and stage.

Writing

- Younger children are beginning to form letters correctly. They write simple sentences about their experiences using full stops and capital letters accurately to punctuate their writing. Children at the middle stages use punctuation and openers appropriately and effectively in their writing. They need to develop further their use of conjunctions to join and extend

sentences to enhance their writing. Older children are developing their use of metaphors and similes in their writing. They need to develop their skills in writing to influence and persuade the reader. Older children need more regular opportunities to use their writing skills in producing extended pieces of writing. Across the school, children need to improve their skills in letter formation and presentation of written work.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, most children are confident in writing and ordering whole numbers appropriate to the CfE level at which they are working. Younger children can add and subtract within 10 and can identify the number before, after and missing numbers in a sequence. Older children demonstrate a good understanding of the differences between debit and credit cards. They can identify the benefits and risks of using bank cards and digital technologies. Children are developing well appropriate understanding of time. They can confidently read and record the time in both 12 hour and 24 hour notation and older children can convert between the two. Older children can calculate time durations successfully. Across the school, children need to develop their skills in working with fractions, decimal fractions and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children identify and recognise a range of two-dimensional shapes accurately and describe the properties of three-dimensional objects with confidence. Older children are less confident in their knowledge and mathematical language associated with circles. Most older children use mathematical language to describe a range of angles including right, acute, obtuse, straight and reflex. Older children would benefit from further work on complementary and supplementary angles.

Information handling

- Across the school, children are able to collect, display and interpret data. Children in the middle stages of the school use digital technology effectively to display data. They use their skills well in using data in a range of real-life contexts. For example, children in P4/5 gather and reflect on information about their achievement of specific writing targets from a class run chart on a daily basis. They are using this information well to improve their writing. Older children have a good understanding of probability and chance. As children move through the school, they should use a wider range of ways to display data including Venn and Carroll diagrams.

Attainment over time

- Across all stages, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy was affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the school is making good progress in raising attainment to pre-pandemic levels in reading, listening and talking and numeracy. Across the school, children's attainment in writing is still below pre-pandemic levels. However, predictions for session 2023 / 2024 show that attainment is predicted to return to pre-pandemic levels in writing across the school. A minority of children are involved in a local authority pilot project to raise attainment in writing at first level. This work is at the early stages of implementation. Initial tracking of children's progress against the specific targets of the intervention shows that almost all children are developing well their skills in using punctuation and a range of vocabulary to open and join sentences in their writing.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are encouraged to share their out of school achievements with staff and their peers and enjoy doing so. All staff and children celebrate children's achievements in school assemblies and on wall displays. All children are developing successfully their skills for learning, life and work through a range of community experiences. Older children take on the role of baristas in the community café. Younger children are involved in decorating the village Christmas tree, maintaining part of the local allotments and caring for school planters. Across the school year, all children have the opportunity to attend out of school clubs, such as art club and athletics. As planned, the headteacher needs to identify and monitor children's participation and the skills children are developing when they engage with achievement activities. This should help staff to support children to develop further their skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic factors affecting children and families. The headteacher closely tracks the progress of all children and identifies gaps in learning between cohorts of pupils. He prioritises the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide a range of targeted interventions for individual children and in class support to help raise attainment across the school. The headteacher identifies gaps in learning between cohorts of pupils. There is currently no poverty related attainment gap in the school.
- The headteacher uses PEF, and accesses grants from local charities, to ensure all children have equal access to school outings and residential trips for older children. The school has a preloved uniform bank and organises Christmas jumper and Halloween costume 'swap shops' which all families access if they so wish. This is helping to reduce the cost of the school day for all families and ensure no child is at risk of missing out.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. The head teacher has effective procedures in place to identify reasons for a child's absence and inform parents if a child's attendance is decreasing.

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.