

Summarised inspection findings

East Linton Primary School

East Lothian Council

7 February 2023

Key contextual information

East Linton Primary School and Nursery Class has as its main catchment the village of East Linton, and surrounding farming hamlets and properties. A minority of children use taxis from small villages to the school.

The school roll in September 2021 was 162, with 40 children in the nursery. The roll is increasing due to new housing developments. Almost all children reside within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles eight and nine.

The headteacher is the only non-class committed member of the school's senior leadership team. A principal teacher has some senior leadership responsibilities but is largely deployed to teach.

The school has a part-time support for learning teacher, as well as visiting specialists of French, music, and physical education. A part-time teacher who specialises in literacy also teaches in collaboration with class teachers. There are two classroom assistants, one of whom is funded by Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The school's allocation for PEF is below the median allocation to all primary schools in the local authority and nationally.

Attendance is in line with national averages. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

Staff maintained learning during the pandemic. Children and staff were well prepared for the move to learning through digital platforms. The school has experienced challenges with staff absences since returning to learning in the school building.

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

- The headteacher provides nurturing leadership, in which a collegiate approach to improvement is encouraged. She is highly respected within the community. All staff's efforts to maintain children's education during the pandemic is valued by parents. Staff and children enjoy many successes as they learn together. Children are now ready for all staff to be more ambitious for what they can achieve. Staff should plan to raise further children's good attainment and accelerate progress. The school's vision should be clear on purpose and direction to enable staff to achieve even better outcomes. The headteacher should ensure a balance between strategic leadership and day to day operational management duties, as the school recovers from the pandemic. This should include strategically leading improvements in the curriculum and how it is delivered to meet the needs of all learners.
- The headteacher has recently led a focus on the school's vision, values and aims to support children's positive interactions with each other and staff. Children are now thinking more about how well they demonstrate the school vision. Learners have appealing mantras they use as

prompts to living the values. As a result, children interact well with each other in almost all cases. Children are considerate of each other.

- The headteacher has an outward look to self-evaluation and improvement by linking to a group of headteachers in similar schools. This group has begun to support and challenge each other about priorities within each other's schools. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the overall quality of education across the school. She meets termly with teachers to discuss all children's progress, attainment, curricula and specific support for children. This gives her an overview of the progress of those requiring support with their learning, as well as those who may be facing poverty and hardships. She should now ensure that all teachers receive more individual feedback to support further improvements, to better meet learners' individual needs and increase further challenge in learning.
- Staff are returning to formal approaches to quality assurance that have been impacted by the pandemic. The headteacher used these approaches to inform the current school improvement plan. Staff are increasing their ownership of the school improvement plan. The current plan has a focus on improving the curriculum, leadership, and wellbeing, equality, and inclusion. Within these priorities, there are projects to assist in achieving accelerated progress in closing the attainment gap for all children. These include raising attainment in writing and numeracy. The headteacher is also increasing the focus on analysing data. She is having a closer look at how support for learning is taken forward in the school.
- The headteacher is using PEF to provide additional support staff. This is effectively increasing the amount of one-to-one support that children receive. Children are assisted to make improved progress in their learning.
- All staff are encouraged to lead improvements. They take forward projects for the school improvement plan, as well as to support longer-term goals within the school. Support staff are effective in helping class teachers with the planning and delivery of learning. They support children well with their learning and development needs. Staff speak positively about the quality and relevance of professional learning opportunities to implement change and improvement. These include leadership qualifications. Staff work with other schools, and within the cluster, to extend their professional learning and knowledge.
- Senior leaders and staff employ a range of approaches to communicate and engage with parents. Senior leaders have rightly identified the need to increase parents' role in school improvement priorities. The Parent Council has increased their role in school improvement. They should be more actively involved in all processes for improvement planning. The principal teacher is beginning to lead projects to increase parents' engagement in the school.
- Children are responsible and successful in contributing to the life of the school. They have begun attending the Parent Council to influence change and improvement through the curriculum. Children participate in a range of leadership opportunities in a planned way. Staff should continue to increase the range of opportunities through which children take a more active role in leading change.

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 experience a warm and positive classroom ethos. This is underpinned by nurturing and mutually respectful relationships. Almost all children are considerate and show empathy for others.
- Children are very confident and independent in their learning. They are very motivated by learning that actively engages them in thinking. They are keen to share their thoughts, feelings and opinions. They know that their views are sought, valued and acted upon. Children cooperate well with each other in pairs and small group activities. In a few classes, children can plan and work using the 'thinking made visible' approach. For example, children in P7 plan and create digital presentations to share their recent experiences at a residential trip.
- Children pay good attention to how they present their work. Teachers should set higher expectations and standards for displaying children's work. These should reflect the quality of work that children can produce. Children should be given more ownership for displaying their learning, including with the use of digital technology.
- Most teachers provide a good variety of motivating and engaging activities, which children enjoy. In almost all classes, children are clear about what they are learning and what is expected of them. Children clearly explain the purpose of their learning and next steps. Children should be challenged further in their learning. They would benefit from more enquiry and play-based approaches, including at P1.
- In almost all classes, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers make effective use of quality questioning to check understanding, extend learning and develop higher-order thinking skills. Children benefit from very targeted support to reduce gaps in progress and attainment in literacy. This assists with sustaining and embedding effective strategies to raise attainment within the curriculum. Children's learning should be less teacher-led when appropriate to meeting the aims of lessons. Teachers should provide more differentiation. Children respond well, and with enthusiasm to visiting specialist teachers' input for French, music and physical education. They learn very effectively within the local community and with partners. This includes the local church and library. In most lessons, plenary sessions enable children to reflect on their learning and recap on skills learned.
- A few teachers plan high-quality outdoor learning experiences. Children are enabled to explore their local community and rural context. For example, children use a reading text as a provocation to learn about people's personal qualities in a range of outdoor experiences. Children develop skills in team working, as well as skills in raft building. There is scope, as planned, for all staff to continue developing and embedding outdoor learning across the curriculum. Partners and community members are offering their valuable services to support the school take this forward.

- There are a few examples of technologies being used well by children. For example, children worked with partners to create a high-quality film in real-life, challenging and relevant contexts. In these situations, children access digital presentation software as part of their learning. Currently, teachers could build further on the improvements they made in their use of digital learning during the pandemic. They should monitor that children's free access to technology supports their intended and responsive learning.
- Teachers use a range of summative and formative assessment approaches within learning and teaching to evidence children's progress. Almost all teachers use formative approaches to gather feedback of understanding as part of their lessons. Teachers should have a more consistent approach to providing written feedback to support children with their next steps in learning.
- Children use assessment jotters to gather evidence of their own progress across the curriculum. Teachers moderate these and, in a few classes, children self-assess their work. There is scope to develop more opportunities for children to include peer-assessment and self-assessment across the school. Teachers should continue to develop further assessment approaches to reflect more learning and evidence of learning across contexts of the curriculum.
- Teachers moderate learning across levels. This is part of a planned quality assurance calendar. Teachers are continuing to develop moderation to agree further a shared understanding of progress through the achievement of a level. This in turn will provide even more robust evidence to inform teachers' judgements. Teachers and senior leaders have extended moderation activities to include colleagues in the cluster. This provides opportunities for staff to collaborate and moderate across schools. Recently, teachers used evidence from interdisciplinary contexts across the school as a focus for professional dialogue.
- The moderation cycle has been used to support a range of curricular areas. Staff are using these experiences to develop an East Linton learning, teaching, and assessment approach. This is at an early stage of development and has potential to help staff to shape their ongoing reviewing, planning, and refreshing of the curriculum.
- Teachers consistently plan learning using East Lothian Council's progression pathways to ensure coverage of experiences and outcomes across the curriculum. Teachers develop a 'Map of the Year' with children to plan their curriculum on an annual basis. The interests of individual classes are considered. Teachers should increase their focus on intended learning, and how this connects and builds on prior knowledge across stages. It will be important to continue to incorporate child-led experiences and differentiation. Teachers will be better enabled to track and monitor learners' progress through a level when planning of learning is improved.
- Teachers and the headteacher discuss progress, strategies, interventions and next steps for all children, particularly for those requiring additional support. Classroom assistants are deployed very effectively, providing a balance of effective direct support to individuals and cohorts of children, and wider support for learning for others.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The headteacher collaborated with staff, children and parents to develop a curriculum rationale prior to the global pandemic. This should be revisited to ensure that it reflects the current context of the school and aspirations for all learners at East Linton Primary School and Nursery Class.
- Teachers are implementing local authority progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum. Teachers should continue to use these pathways to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children. Staff, children, and parents should identify the outcomes they seek for all learners within the totality of the curriculum. Children can apply their literacy and numeracy skills across other areas of the curriculum. As part of this, they should make connections between curricular areas and themes important to children and their context. These would include global citizenship and learning for sustainability. This would provide rich learning experiences that offer challenge, depth, and relevance.
- Children explore diversity and multi-faith issues at points throughout the school year. As a result, they demonstrate respect for the beliefs and choices of others.
- Teachers provide children with two hours of physical education weekly. This is supported by high-quality specialist input. It would be beneficial for class teachers to observe the input of the specialist for professional learning purposes.
- Staff have developed a garden and small nature area within the school grounds. A few classes use the school grounds for learning outdoors. Staff should review their policy for learning outdoors to ensure experiences are purposeful, regular, progressive and embedded within the totality of the curriculum.
- The school has a well-stocked library that is timetabled for use by all classes weekly. In addition, children use the local community library and the local authority's library service to provide resources to enhance learning. Teachers make effective use of these facilities to allow children to develop a range of literacy skills and support the development and progression of reading across all classes.
- The headteacher should continue having a strategic overview of the curriculum. This will provide clearer direction for staff to embed the principles of curriculum design.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The headteacher has established a strong sense of community. She is very visible with parents and prioritises time to meet with families, both formally and informally. This assists with creating links with several partners to enrich children’s learning experiences and accelerate progress. For example, the Scotland Reads initiative engages parents in supporting children’s literacy skills at home.
- Families know they can share worries and concerns with the headteacher, and that they will receive support and advice.
- The Parent Council is enjoying a higher profile, with increased impact in giving children a voice in sharing their learning. They engage children in their meetings to share their learning. The Parent Council is ready to be involved in more of the strategic planning of the school.

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

- The headteacher leads a school that is welcoming and caring. She is very approachable and supports children and their families with their concerns. Children and staff enjoy mutually positive relationships across the school community. Children and staff look out for each other.
- Staff have a strong understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Children use the indicators well to help them reflect on their individual needs, wellbeing and protecting their rights. Most teachers' use of values and mantras, such as "Ready, respect and safety" feature regularly in most classes. Children contribute well to establishing school charters. These are based on children's rights, for which the school has been awarded a bronze award.
- Almost all children feel safe in school, listened to and cared for. They identify a person in school with whom they may speak if they have a concern or worry. Almost all children are very motivated by school. They show this in several ways, including with their good attendance at school. This is in line with national averages. Children's views are sought and listened to through their membership of groups.
- Children can talk about how their learning supports their health and wellbeing. Teachers have supported children with a focus on resilience. This was in response to helping children cope with the pandemic. Children are encouraged to use calming areas within the school and classrooms when they feel the need of a break. This encourages them to manage their own emotions well.
- Classes engage well in physical activities during the school day, for example, the 'daily mile.' This is in addition to two-hours of physical education weekly. Children recognise the benefits to their wellbeing from learning in the outdoors, including with partners. Children in P5 to P7 have their learning recognised with a John Muir Award. The school's secure grounds include a garden area that children maintain. This fosters their interests in sustainability, for which teachers have plans to extend. A next step for the school will be to make increased use of these grounds to support children's outdoor learning and wellbeing. It would now be important to see how these important elements can be built into a progressive health and wellbeing programme, as part of children's learning journey. Almost all children enjoy the school grounds at break times and lunchtimes.
- Children across the school are supported to make healthy and safe choices. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe online.
- Children enjoy leadership opportunities across the school, both in and outwith class. This includes children in P7 being house captains. Children participate in clubs at school and at events within their communities. Children value these activities very highly as opportunities to develop their skills and confidence. They look forward to other events also being available

again, such as the choir. As part of this, staff should review the totality of the health and wellbeing offer to ensure progression and high expectations for children at all stages.

- Staff and young people have had a focus on promoting positive relationships. Almost all children feel that staff treat them with respect. Staff intervene quickly when learners are showing any signs of distress. Almost all children believe that bullying is not an issue at the school. They feel that staff intervene quickly and effectively when a bullying incident takes place.
- The headteacher uses PEF effectively to provide personalised learning support for identified children and families. This is supporting most children well to improve their attainment and progress, and overcome any wellbeing related barriers to learning.
- Staff regularly engage in a range of professional learning that supports their understanding of legislative requirements. Senior leaders and staff ensure that children who need additional support with their learning and development have planned support. They link well with partners to ensure that children receive targeted support.
- Strategies to support children should be made available to all staff in order that children can be supported well across the totality of their learning. Staff should continue to discuss and review the progress that children receiving additional support are making. The headteacher should ensure that all those involved in providing specialist support and interventions discuss and evaluate their inputs. This will help to make sure that children's support is better connected and coherent, with well-targeted interventions recorded and evaluated systematically. This would help accelerate children's progress and raise attainment.
- The school improvement plan has an action on revisiting the roles of support for learning. The headteacher should now prioritise taking this forward to give continued clarity, purpose and direction to this aspect of the school's work.
- Children's diversity is celebrated across the school. Children experience a range of learning activities that recognise and celebrate diversity through assemblies and class activities. This is supported very well by partners. Children learn in responsive and meaningful ways, as well as ensuring that a planned approach is followed. Staff should continue to develop more planned and progressive opportunities for children to learn about aspects of diversity and discrimination.

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good, with most children making progress in line with national expectations. Across the school, there is scope to provide further challenge and increased opportunities for application of children's skills and learning in different contexts.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading and in listening and talking. The majority of children are making good progress in writing. This is an area for improvement that has been identified in the current school improvement plan.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children are making good progress in listening and talking. At early level, most children can listen and respond to others appropriately, and follow instructions. A few require support to listen during group activities and to take turns to speak. The majority of children at first level listen respectfully and respond to the ideas of others. A few would benefit from developing an understanding of non-verbal cues to engage with their peers in discussion. At second level, most children can communicate several relevant ideas, information and opinions when engaging with others. This includes building on the ideas of peers by asking relevant questions, clarifying points, or supporting others' opinions.

Reading

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. At early level, almost all children can use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. Most children enjoy reading or listening to different texts. They can share likes and dislikes. At first level, most children can read aloud fluently, with expression. They can explain why they select certain books. They know how to use the blurb and their knowledge of authors to select texts for enjoyment. At second level, most children identify techniques used to influence the reader. A few children would benefit from further opportunities to answer evaluative and inferential questions about texts.

Writing

- In writing, the majority of children make good progress across the school. At early level, a few children write at least one sentence independently and attempt to use their knowledge of sounds to spell familiar words correctly. Most can communicate ideas, messages and information verbally or in pictures. At first level, the majority of children can write independently in a clear and legible way. They would benefit from more experience in writing across other genres within their curricular contexts. At second level, most children can write for a range of purposes and audiences. Learners apply their knowledge of spelling patterns, punctuation and grammar. They review writing to ensure it makes sense. Children at first and second levels would benefit from further opportunities for functional writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Across the school, there is scope to provide further challenge and application of children's skills and learning in different contexts.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children can order numbers forwards and backwards within 30. They can match amounts to numbers and pictures with increasing confidence. Almost all children add within 20. They are less confident with subtraction. Children can name the months of the year and the days of the week in sequence. At first level, children can round two- and three-digit numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 with increasing confidence. They can add and subtract with three digits using a range of strategies through word problems. Almost all children can identify fractions and order simple fractions in order of size. Children are confident in identifying notes and coins up to £20 to make a total. They identify the amount of change required, within a real-life context. At second level, almost all children can read, order and sequence numbers up to 100,000. They can partition whole numbers and decimal fractions to three decimal places. They are less confident in multiplying decimal fractions by ten and 100.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes. At first level, children can use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects including side, face, and edge. Almost all can identify at least two lines of symmetry within a shape. At second level, most children can identify acute and obtuse angles, and calculate the perimeter of a shape. Almost all children are not yet accurate using specific vocabulary including the diameter, radius, and circumference.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children collect and organise information to create a simple bar chart. They answer simple questions, using the vocabulary of most and least. At first level, children can interpret information displayed on a table. They answer questions well relating to information. At second level, almost all children explain when they would use a bar chart, pie chart and a Venn diagram.

Attainment over time

- Data provided by the school demonstrates that they have maintained good standards of attainment for most children over the last three years. The headteacher has identified a drop in attainment outcomes for children in writing. This is identified as an area for improvement for this session. Teachers' improved systems for planning, tracking and monitoring will support even more robust and reliable data to support professional judgements.
- Staff should make further use of assessment data to inform their decisions about how best to support and challenge children's learning. A more strategic approach to analysing a range of data, including standardised national assessments, will support staff to target individual children's needs, as well as adjustments to teaching programmes.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Achievements within school are shared and celebrated at weekly school assemblies, including 'Learning Heroes,' 'Walking with Pride,' and certificates to acknowledge 'Over and Above.' Children speak positively about these achievements. The school also uses social media and their school blog to share children's experiences and achievements with home.
- Across the school, children give their views to help shape the life and work of the school community. They develop a good understanding of leadership roles by participating in a range

of committee groups. House captains and vice captains take a lead role in the school. Children have a positive influence on learning and wider achievements within the local community. They benefit from strong connections with the church and East Linton Action Climate group. This is having a positive influence on children's learning and wider achievements within the local community.

- Children develop resilience, teamwork, and communication skills through their participation in the John Muir Award. Children in P7 attend an outdoor residential trip.
- Learners' participation in sports and physical activity is tracked by the Active School's Coordinator. There is scope for the school to celebrate achievements from home, and track children's participation in after school clubs.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher tracks the progress of groups of children, including those who require additional support, those who are care experienced or face poverty-related barriers to their learning and wellbeing. As a result, appropriate interventions are in place. The school demonstrates good progress towards reducing identified gaps for the poverty-related attainment gap. Children make very good use of a reading initiative that encourages them to read quality, challenging books. Children's successes in continuous reading are celebrated.
- The headteacher monitors the cost of the school day. She is sensitive to the increasing financial pressure on children and their families. Staff are supporting families' wellbeing with discretion and sensitivity. They also actively engage the Parent Council to work together to find solutions for equity for all.

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.