

Summarised inspection findings

Gartconner Primary School

East Dunbartonshire Council

29 October 2024

Key contextual information

Gartconner Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in East Dunbartonshire. The school is in a semi-rural area on the outskirts of Kirkintilloch. The school roll is 287 children arranged over 11 classes.

A minority of children reside in decile three of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and the majority reside in decile nine. The acting headteacher has been in post since August 2024, having been the depute headteacher in the school for eight years. She is supported by two principal teachers.

20% of children in the school have additional support needs. 11% of children are in receipt of free school meals.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">learning and engagementquality of teachingeffective use of assessmentplanning, tracking and monitoring	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">In almost all classes, children’s learning experiences are underpinned by well embedded rights-based approaches and the recently-refreshed school values. Most children are engaged in their learning and are motivated in class. Almost all children demonstrate high standards of behaviour and respect for others. This impacts positively on their learning. They are enthusiastic, eager to learn and settle quickly to learning activities. Almost all children enjoy learning at school. Children work together successfully in small groups and pairs and engage well in individual work across curricular areas.Almost all classes are calm, well resourced and literacy-rich learning environments. Classroom environments are positive and respectful and encourage children to achieve their very best. Learning experiences outdoors encourage and motivate most children. In most classes, teachers provide a range of learning activities to sustain children’s engagement and participation. In almost all lessons, teachers provide very clear instructions and explanations. As a result, children understand the activities they undertake, the skills they are developing and how their learning is aligned with their rights. Teachers should make more explicit reference to the skills children are developing during lessons. A planned skills framework will further support this work across the school. This will provide a consistent approach to building the language of skills into day-to-day learning for all children across all classes.The pace of learning is appropriate for most children. Most children experience learning which is set at the right level of challenge. Teachers should work with senior leaders to explore further the ways in which they support children who require more challenge in their learning. This may include for example, researching and leading on a subject which is of interest to them, and sharing this with their class.	

- Almost all teachers plan appropriately for children with a strong focus on their wellbeing and learning needs. Most children experience learning where they have some personalisation and choice in what and how they learn. Most children have positive experiences in leading aspects of their learning. Senior leaders should work closely with teaching and support staff to further develop this area of work to ensure that children's experiences are more closely aligned to their interests.
- Almost all teachers set high expectations for children. Children's rights are well embedded in lessons across the school and in the approaches taken by almost all teachers through their interactions with children. The learning undertaken by children is often shared through assemblies, the demonstration of their skills to others and through a range of leadership opportunities across the school. This is contributing meaningfully to the ways in which children influence and support others and contribute to the life and work of the school. Most children are clear about the purpose of their learning within lessons and what they need to do to be successful. The co creation of success criteria would enable children to take greater ownership of their learning and would further motivate them in lessons.
- Most teachers use a range of creative approaches in the delivery of the curriculum. They utilise resources effectively to ensure that children experience the support and challenge they require to achieve success. The limited use of digital technology due to connectivity issues in the school is significantly limiting the ways in which children experience learning. Children's ability to research, design and create content digitally is being impacted negatively as a result.
- Most teachers use questioning to promote curiosity and develop children's high order thinking skills. Senior leaders should work closely with all teaching staff to promote and develop further the consistency of this work across all classes.
- Most teachers provide feedback to support children in a variety of ways, including written feedback and next steps in jotters, and regular verbal feedback. Staff use praise effectively to support and enhance well, children's learning experiences. Teachers should continue to develop the provision of high-quality feedback to maximise its impact in supporting all learners.
- Almost all teachers monitor children's progress and achievement using an agreed class tracking system. This supports the identification of children who require more challenge in their learning and those who may require additional support. Senior leaders meet with teachers regularly to review progress and achievement data. This informs the identification of children requiring additional support, including those who are care experienced and those who have English as an additional language.
- All staff know their children well and are aware of any barriers to learning that they may face. The majority of children who have additional support needs are supported appropriately in class by teachers and by skilled support staff. Almost all teachers support children to access a range of appropriate interventions to ensure that they make the best possible progress in their learning. The learning of a minority of children requiring additional support does not effectively meet their needs. Senior leaders and staff should review interventions continuously to evaluate their impact and effectiveness. Senior leaders should carefully monitor the time that children who require additional support spend out of class when engaging in activities to support their progress. This will ensure that they are able to engage fully in class activities with their peers, supported by their class teacher.
- Children are experiencing play-based activities in the early stages of primary. All children benefit from an outdoor play and learning initiative which is supporting their learning and the

development of skills. As a next step the school should build on the foundations of the skills children are developing in the early years setting. They need make use of provocations to maximise the opportunities for learning and teaching through play. Working with senior leaders, teachers and practitioners should work closely to further develop play-based learning across the school.

- All teachers plan learning well using a range of frameworks which have been developed over time. These support teachers well to ensure that their programmes of work reflect Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They plan collaboratively with stage partners where appropriate. Increased collaborative planning has been a key focus in recent months during the implementation of a new approach to the teaching of maths. This has been effective in setting standards and expectations and ensures that teachers implementing the programme are consistent in their approaches. A next step would be to involve children more regularly in the planning of learning.
- A range of quality assessments are used to gather valid, reliable and robust evidence and enable children to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities. Teachers use a range of summative assessments to assess the progress children are making. These include national assessment tools. All teachers include formative assessment strategies as part of their planning. Teachers should further develop this to maximise their opportunities to assess how children are progressing in their learning within lessons.
- The engagement of all teachers in moderation activities ensures they have a shared understanding of standards and their professional judgement is robust and reliable. Senior leaders and staff should now look outwards and work with other schools across the authority to further strengthen their approaches to moderation.

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

- Attendance levels are above the national average. The headteacher is vigilant in tracking the attendance of all children and takes appropriate action where individual children's attendance falls.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. In June 2024, most children at P1, P4 and P7 achieved expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and numeracy. At P7 most children achieved expected levels of attainment in talking and listening. Almost all pupils at P1 and P4 achieved the expected level in talking and listening. Most children achieved expected levels of attainment in numeracy, at P1, P4 and P7.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, most children make good progress in literacy and English. Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen well to adults and peers in a range of situations. At early level, most children respond appropriately to simple questions and instructions. Most listen and talk to each other with interest as they play together. A few children talk over and interrupt each other when working in a group. At P4, all children describe the features required when presenting a prepared talk in class or at pupil led assemblies. They identify what makes a respectful audience. At P7 most children read fluently and with understanding. A few children should use more expression in their voice when reading aloud, to engage the listener more effectively.

Reading

- Across the school children enjoy reading for pleasure. Most children express their preferences for books and authors and give reasons for their choices. They use library areas very well within classrooms to read texts related to their interests and to read for pleasure.
- Most children across the school read confidently and apply strategies to help them, which are appropriate to their stage. At early level, a few children need to continue to learn initial sounds and blends to help them to read more fluently. At first level, children are confident reading familiar words and phrases aloud with expression. A few children are less confident when identifying information from a range of sources. Children at second level apply prediction and skimming and scanning skills to help them read and understand texts. Children would benefit from further support to answer inferential questions to demonstrate their understanding.

Writing

- At early level, most children are forming letters correctly and demonstrating an awareness of capital letters, finger spaces and full stops. They enjoy writing as part of play activities. The majority of children at first level use a range of openers, connectives and punctuation to enhance their writing. As children move through the stages of the school, they write for different purposes, often linked to their learning contexts. Most children identify features of imaginative, functional and personal writing. At second level children are confident using techniques to enhance their work, for example onomatopoeia, similes and metaphors. Most older children enjoy creating and writing stories, including extended pieces of writing. As a next step, children would benefit from further learning the skills of editing and redrafting their own work.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children at all stages apply numeracy and mathematics skills in a range of real-life contexts. A few learners at all levels require further challenge in their maths and numeracy learning whilst a few others require to be appropriately supported.

Number, money and measure

- Children who have achieved early level, order numbers correctly within the range of 0 to 20. They can name the days of the week and the months of the year in sequence. They understand the relative value of different coins. Children who are on track to achieve first level read, write, order and recite numbers up to 1,000 accurately. Most children are able to solve two-step problems. A few children require support to explain the role of the numerator and denominator in fractions. Most children at second level, explain the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers. They multiply whole numbers by two digits confidently. They need to develop their skills in calculating the volume of three-dimensional objects.

Shape, position and movement

- Children who have achieved early level, identify correctly common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Almost all children who are on track to achieve first level, name and identify a range of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects successfully. They are not yet confident using a range of mathematical language to describe the properties of shapes and objects. Almost all children working at second level, use mathematical language accurately to describe and classify angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children use their knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort items in different ways through play. Children who are on track to achieve first level, answer simple questions to extract key information from data sets effectively. They would benefit from gathering, sorting and displaying data regularly using a variety of different methods. Most children working at second level, interpret information and draw accurate conclusions from graphs successfully. They should now develop their information handling skills in using digital technology.
- At second level, children are beginning to use the language of probability to describe the likelihood of simple events, for example certain, probably, unlikely.

Attainment over time

- Almost all children's progress in learning in literacy and numeracy has improved over time. Staff use the school tracking system with increasing confidence to record effectively, children's progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff make effective use of assessments and their shared understanding of standards to make confident professional judgements about how well children are learning and progressing.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The school have been working towards a gold award in celebration of their work on children's rights and had their sustainability work recognised through a national award in June 2024. Children working together to gain national accreditation, supports well their teamwork and communication skills and strengthens their sense of belonging. Children's achievements both in and out with school are valued and celebrated at whole school assemblies and through termly newsletters. These range from sporting successes to community activities. Children are proud of their wide-ranging achievements and talk confidently about how they feel the school celebrates their own successes, as well as those at a class and school level.
- Children are keen to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Most children engage in a range of committees to support their developing leadership skills. These include a junior leadership team, sustainability group and junior road safety officers. As a result, children are growing in confidence and demonstrating valuable skills in teamwork and citizenship. Children feel they are listened to, and their opinions valued. The school should look at ways to extend these leadership opportunities to all children.
- There are varied and extensive lunch time clubs initiated by pupils such as dance, finger knitting and coding clubs. Participation in these clubs supports children to develop and demonstrate important skills including confidence building, communication and problem solving. Children would like to participate in clubs and activities beyond the school day. The school is at the early stages of tracking children's participation in clubs and committees within the school and local community and the skills they are developing as a result. This helps them to identify children who are not participating in any additional activities. As planned, teachers will use this information to ensure all children take part in relevant school-based activities.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a very clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. Senior leaders and staff know children and their families well. As a result, children and families benefit from a range of practical support. The headteacher ensures that all children are included, and that cost is not a barrier to participation. Families have access to a uniform swap shop and all children can choose free fruit snacks. Children take part in school trips which are provided with no cost to families.
- Senior leaders and staff need to focus more closely on the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to raise attainment and target gaps in children's literacy and numeracy skills that are as result of socio-economic disadvantage. Senior leaders should consult more widely with parents, children and all key stakeholders on the use of PEF.

Other 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. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school, the private care provider 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.