

# Summarised inspection findings

**St John the Baptist Primary School**

South Lanarkshire Council

28 May 2024

## Key contextual information

St John the Baptist Primary School is a denominational primary school located in Uddingston, South Lanarkshire. There are 329 children in 12 classes. 74.4% of children come from backgrounds which correspond to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 7 to 10. The headteacher took up post in November 2023. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and an acting principal teacher.

St John the Baptist Primary School nursery class 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 stages.

### 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

- Senior leaders created the vision and values of the school in consultation with parents, children, and staff. The vision is captured in the acronym SHINE: successful, hardworking, included, nurturing and excellent. Staff used their understanding of the school's context and the school community in general effectively, to shape the school values. The five agreed values are honesty, trust, respect, faith, and friendship. Helpfully, senior leaders have discussed each aspect of the SHINE vision with children throughout the year at assemblies. Staff have a clear focus on SHINE in classrooms during learning activities and points are awarded to children who embody these attributes. Staff also use a SHINE display board to highlight the out-of-school achievements of children. Overall, the SHINE approach is understood and endorsed by children, staff, and parents, and makes a positive contribution to the welcoming and nurturing ethos of the school.
- Senior leaders meet weekly to discuss priorities and review effectively the work of the school. The new headteacher has spent time since their appointment identifying the school's strengths and areas for development through observation and discussion with staff, parents, and children. The experienced deputy headteachers are well regarded by staff, who value particularly their work in helping them to meet children's additional support needs. Now that the new headteacher is established in post, senior leaders should review their remits and areas of responsibility. This should support them to strengthen further their leadership of change and improvement across the school.
- Senior leaders use a range of effective approaches to communicate with parents. These include an online parent portal, text messages, social media, and paper-based information. Parents particularly appreciate the visibility and availability of senior leaders through their

presence at the school gates each day. As a result, parents receive important information about their child and the work of the school quickly, effectively, and sustainably.

- Senior leaders and staff use the school improvement plan well to share improvement priorities. They ensure that staff feel consulted and involved in the identification and development of improvement priorities. Senior leaders take appropriate account of learning community and local authority priorities. They ensure that priorities for improvement are communicated to parents and children through the provision of simplified versions of the plan. Appropriately, the current improvement plan focuses on developing staff's understanding of play pedagogy and ensuring that learning activities meet the needs of all children. The learning community target articulates well with the school's initiative to improve inclusion. Senior leaders should now ensure that progress towards achieving the specific targets set out within the improvement plan is reviewed more regularly. Senior leaders should increase further the involvement of all parents and partners in monitoring, evaluating, and contributing to the work of the school.
- The school is well supported by an active Parent Council. Senior leaders consult the Parent Council about aspects of school improvement. The views of the Parent Council are also used to inform Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation spending. Parent Council members appreciate the opportunity to be involved in this collaborative approach to budgeting. The impact of PEF initiatives in previous years has been difficult to demonstrate and senior leaders should, as planned, ensure that more focused outcomes and measures are used which will support the tracking of PEF initiatives.
- Senior leaders identified the need to improve the consistency of learning and teaching across the school. To support this improvement initiative, staff adopted Improving Our School (IOS) methodology at the end of last session. This is beginning to improve the consistency of learning and teaching across the school. Staff are implementing this methodology with enthusiasm. Staff now need to increase the pace of change in relation to other identified development priorities.
- Senior leaders have ensured that staff are provided with appropriate professional learning opportunities to support school improvement priorities. For example, all staff have engaged in professional learning in nurture and deaf awareness. This has improved staff awareness and skills in meeting a wider range of needs. Staff engagement in maths recovery and literacy recovery training is supporting the school's raising attainment agenda. Staff have found this learning helpful and impactful. Staff find senior leaders extremely supportive in helping to improve their practice through skills development.
- Senior leaders have developed a useful quality improvement calendar which indicates expectations from, and involvement of, the senior leadership team in improvement activities. These improvement activities include, for example, planning, tracking, and monitoring meetings, jotter sampling and classroom visits. As a result of quality assurance activities, senior leaders have correctly identified the need to develop more detailed short-term planning with teachers.
- Staff are keen to improve further the work of the school and engage in leadership opportunities. They would benefit from additional direction and support from senior leaders to ensure that these leadership roles are firmly focused on school improvement. However, staff are fully involved in development groups taking forward priorities from the school improvement plan. For example, staff participate in working groups developing writing, and learning and teaching. Staff can identify how these groups are having a positive impact on learning activities. For example, staff feel more confident about the teaching and assessment of writing. There is scope for practitioner enquiry to be reintroduced and developed in the school with this

positive, collegiate group of teachers. Senior leaders should continue to develop a culture which encourages creativity and innovation.

- Children have a range of leadership opportunities in school, and they undertake these with enthusiasm. For example, they run clubs for their peers and those in P7 are buddies for younger children. The pupil leadership team has representation from across the school and is involved in activities to consult and support their peers. This has included running an assembly and using a questionnaire to identify issues. They have also written and circulated a pupil-friendly version of the school improvement plan. Overall, children feel listened to when they make suggestions to staff and can give examples of their ideas being followed up and implemented.

## 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 children across the school benefit from a positive, calm, caring and nurturing ethos which reflects the school's Gospel values and in which they feel safe. All children have very positive relationships with each other and with adults. Children speak extremely enthusiastically about a range of ways that they are motivated by their learning. They are very eager to learn, and they engage well with learning activities in the classroom. When teachers plan opportunities for children to lead their learning, they are actively engaged and highly motivated. This builds children's confidence in taking responsibility for their learning.
- Teachers organise learning activities to include opportunities for children to work independently, work with peers, and participate in class discussions. A minority of teachers give children opportunities to use peer assessment to give each other feedback on their learning. Teachers should continue to support children to understand and articulate the skills they are developing and provide time for them to respond to written feedback.
- In most lessons, teachers provide very clear and helpful instructions and explanations. All teachers share the purpose of learning with children, along with how they can be successful in their learning. They also encourage children to consider and suggest the success criteria for these learning activities. A minority of teachers use questioning very well to extend children's thinking. This good practice should be shared across the school as teachers develop further their practice. Most teachers provide effective plenary sessions to help children discuss and evaluate their learning.
- Most lessons build effectively on children's prior learning. In the majority of learning activities, staff observe children's participation well and intervene appropriately to support and extend their learning. Teachers make good provision for all children in their classes, including those with additional support needs. They differentiate learning activities appropriately to meet these needs. As planned, teachers should explore ways to provide children with increased opportunities for creativity. Teachers should continue to maximise opportunities for children to plan collaboratively. A minority of teachers need to increase the pace and challenge within lessons. Teachers' adoption of IOS methodology at the end of last session has increased professional dialogue about learning and teaching. Teachers' experience of working with the programme is also beginning to improve consistency across the school. For example, teachers can see that this is having a positive effect on their development of the curriculum.
- Across the school, teachers and support staff make good use of digital devices to engage children meaningfully in learning, such as undertaking research online. Teachers also use these devices to develop children's digital skills, for example in coding. Digital devices are used well by children who require additional support to access their learning. Most children make use of a digital platform to access and engage with homework activities. Teachers

regularly use interactive whiteboards well to enhance learning and teaching. In a few lessons, children use these to demonstrate their understanding of concepts taught.

- Teachers are developing a shared understanding of learning through play. They are exploring the role of the adult in the learning environment through professional learning and dialogue. This approach is at the early stages of development. As planned, staff should continue to make best use of educational research and national practice guidance to inform their understanding of practice in this area and ensure improved outcomes for learners.
- Most teachers use formative assessment strategies effectively. Teachers use an agreed range of summative, diagnostic, standardised and periodic assessment activities, reflecting the learning community's assessment framework. This provides a helpful overview of assessment across the year to gather information about children's progress. Teachers should now consider further how the diagnostic information from these assessments can better support children with their learning and progress.
- Teachers have engaged in formal and informal moderation activities. As a result, they are becoming increasingly confident when making judgements about children's levels of attainment. As planned, they should now engage in further moderation activity with colleagues in the school and beyond. This will help them to become more skilled in their use of national Benchmarks and progression frameworks to assess children's development and to develop further a shared understanding of national standards.
- Teachers plan the curriculum effectively, considering the four contexts of learning and coverage of experiences and outcomes. Whilst this is effective for each individual class, teachers should now develop a consistent, agreed approach to short-term planning across the school. They should clearly identify how children will make progress in their learning through the activities that are planned for in the classroom. Most children feel that teachers ask them about what they would like to learn in class.
- Senior leaders track and monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing effectively. Termly dialogue and tracking meetings between teachers and senior leaders focus on reviewing children's progress. Staff take individual children's circumstances into account when discussing their progress and achievement. Together, teachers and senior leaders identify children who are not making expected progress. They then plan additional support or challenge for them in their learning. This is enabling these targeted children to make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Teachers' participation in the IOS professional learning initiative enables them to carefully analyse their class data and plan children's next steps in learning well. Teachers are growing in confidence using the effective 'fact, story, action' approach to identifying the learning needs of individual children. Support staff work well with class teachers to provide focused individual and group interventions for children. These interventions are helping an increasing number of children to experience success in their learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use progression pathways effectively to support planning across all curricular areas. These have been designed to support teachers to plan learning and teaching which builds on what children already know. Staff use a digital technology progression pathway well to plan approaches to digital learning. This helps teachers to ensure that children develop important, progressive skills as they move through the school. Identified children have regular access to digital technology to support learning.
- Staff recognise the importance of linking learning to the world of work. Effective partnership working is enhancing the curriculum and providing children with opportunities to develop skills for learning, life, and work. Staff engage with partners from a wide variety of professions and vocations to provide a World of Work Week. This enables children to benefit from talks and presentations on how knowledge and skills are developed and applied in the workplace.
- Staff ensure that all children receive their curriculum entitlement of two hours of quality physical education each week. Children across the school learn Spanish from P1 to P7. Staff should now work to implement a pathway for a 'plus two' language from P5 to P7.
- Outdoor learning is at the early stages of development across the school. Groups of children engage in Forest Schools sessions to develop their creativity and social skills. The school's outdoor learning coordinator has created helpful guidance and resources to support the further development of outdoor learning. Staff should now increase the frequency of outdoor learning sessions and identify contexts where the use of the outdoors will meaningfully enhance learning and teaching.
- The school library is used well by staff to provide children with opportunities to develop their reading for enjoyment and reading skills. The provision is supported by a volunteer from the local community. Children borrow books from the library and take them home to enjoy. Classes visit the school library on a weekly basis. Across the year a few classes visit the local community library.
- Staff work well across the school to provide appropriate experiences in transitions from stage to stage, from nursery to P1, and P7 into secondary school. Staff use robust transition procedures, including sharing planning information, progress, and assessment data to promote continuity of learning. Staff visit all associated nurseries and offer to visit pre-school children at home before they begin their formal transition visits to school. Older children enjoy supporting this successful P1 transition through a buddy system. Children in P7 engage in a variety of transition activities as they prepare for secondary school. This contributes positively to children settling well into to a new stage or their new setting.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school is well supported by an active Parent Council, which is consulted about and ratifies improvement priorities. Parent Council members also appreciate the opportunity to be involved in discussions about how school funds are used. As planned, senior leaders should now consider ways in which parents can contribute to the school's self-evaluation activities leading to school improvement.
- Parents appreciate the way that staff share information about their children's learning and achievements. There is scope for school staff to organise activities where they can learn with their child and give them advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- Staff value the feedback they receive from parents about the work of the school. They also appreciate the way in which parents engage with the school to enhance children's experiences. For example, parents host clubs and activities, share their knowledge about the world of work and have improved the school environment through tree-planting with children.



## 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very 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

- Senior leaders and all staff place children's wellbeing at the heart of the work of the school. To support this, staff place great emphasis on building and sustaining positive respectful relationships between all members of the school community. As a result, all children experience an inclusive and nurturing environment. This is a major strength of the school. Children are very proud of their school and feel highly motivated to do well in their schoolwork. Classroom teachers, support assistants and senior leaders know individual children very well and support them to achieve the best possible outcomes. Staff should now, as planned, review the school's position statement on promoting positive behaviour and relationships. This should ensure that it aligns fully with the current very effective approaches in place to support children's wellbeing.
- Staff and children exemplify the school's values, which are embedded in the daily work of the school community. As a result, most children feel safe, respected, and confident in school. They know that they can share their anxieties with trusted adults in the school. The school vision and values underpin the high expectations that staff have for children's wellbeing.
- Staff have a robust understanding of the national Getting it Right for Every Child. They support children to have a very good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Class teachers carry out wellbeing check-ins with children in their class every day. Each term, children evaluate their own wellbeing through a survey and create their own personalised 'wellbeing passport'. As a result, children understand and are very confident in talking about their own wellbeing and know that they will receive help if they need it. Staff support children who have concerns about any aspect of their wellbeing very well to overcome challenges and barriers they may face. Senior leaders carefully track children's wellbeing over time and respond quickly when any child's wellbeing needs to be supported. Staff create nurture groups to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children to get their wellbeing back on track. For example, because of nurturing approaches, children have developed skills in de-escalation, empathy for others, and are increasingly able to understand their own emotions.
- Most children feel that staff listen to their views about a wide range of aspects of school life and a majority feel that their views are considered. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop children's awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This will help children to understand the importance of their views in planning improvements in the school.
- Senior leaders and staff fulfil their statutory duties for wellbeing, equality, and inclusion very effectively. This includes meeting the needs of children who require additional support for their learning. Staff undertake a wide range of professional learning to ensure that they can meet the learning or wellbeing needs of children. Support staff are deployed effectively to support

children to achieve success, for example in literacy and numeracy work. Staff have a very clear understanding of the school's staged interventions processes. Wherever necessary, children have well-written additional support plans in place to help them to succeed. Senior leaders and staff review and adapt plans regularly, involving children and their parents to contribute very well. All are involved in open discussions about the planned interventions and progress towards agreed learning targets.

- Staff work very effectively with a wide range of local authority and third sector partners to support wellbeing, mental health, and physical disability. All partners feel very well supported by school staff in their work with children. They feel fully involved in discussions about planning interventions, for example to build children's resilience. Partners welcome the many opportunities to provide professional learning for staff. This includes, for instance, training in the use of assistive technology for children with hearing impairment and mindfulness techniques to help children to self-regulate. As a result, children are more able to engage with learning.
- Children have high levels of attendance, above the national average. Senior leaders track individual attendance carefully and work closely with families where children's attendance has fallen below acceptable levels. As a result, the attendance of these children is maintained or improved.
- No children have been excluded from the school in recent years. This is because staff and partners develop effective individualised packages of support for children at risk of exclusion. As a result, children can maintain their attendance while working to overcome challenges they may be facing.
- Children in the school explore issues relating to equalities and diversity. They have a growing awareness of the protected characteristics. The recently formed Conversation Club promotes inclusion and fosters children's appreciation of the backgrounds of those who have differing heritages and "origin stories". The group is ensuring the school library provides an appropriately diverse range of books. Planning is also underway to hold a whole-school event to coincide with Euro 2024 and the Olympics to help their peers understand the features of different cultures.
- The school's low incidence of bullying reflects the focus on mutual respect and positive relationships. The school's anti-bullying policy is aligned with the local authority's policy and is informed by the national Respectme anti-bullying service. Most children and their parents who expressed a view agree that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- School staff have worked with colleagues in the local school cluster to develop a transition package in relation to race equality. This is based on a novel that addresses issues of racism to help children understand race equality.
- Senior leaders and staff, supported by partners and parents, work to ensure that children have access to all activities and experiences that the school offers. Staff successfully remove barriers, including financial barriers, to children's participation. Staff's detailed knowledge of children's circumstances helps to ensure that no children miss out on opportunities for achievements.

### 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

- In 2022-23, most children achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy at early and first levels and almost all at second level. In numeracy, almost all children achieved expected CfE levels.
- Overall, in 2023-24, most children across the school are predicted to achieve expected CfE levels in writing. Almost all children are predicted to achieve expected CfE levels in reading, listening, and talking and numeracy.
- Most children who receive additional support for their learning make good progress against their individual targets for learning. A few children are achieving nationally expected CfE levels.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children are making very good progress.

#### Listening and talking

- Most children at early level share their ideas and thoughts confidently. Almost all children at first level contribute well to group and class discussions and use appropriate vocabulary to support their explanations. Almost all children at second level are skilled at building on the contributions of others. A few children would benefit from further practice in using non-verbal techniques as they share ideas with others.

#### Reading

- Most children at early level blend letter sounds together to read unfamiliar words and broaden their vocabulary. They engage with and answer questions about texts read to them. Almost all children at first level read familiar pieces of text effectively. A few children are less confident in explaining their reading preferences. Most children at second level recognise techniques used to influence the reader, such as word choice and emotive language. A few children are not yet fully confident in reading fluently to demonstrate their understanding.

#### Writing

- Most children write clearly and legibly, as appropriate to their CfE level. Most children at early level create short information texts and personal recounts. Most children at first level spell most familiar and unfamiliar words correctly and use grammar and connectives appropriately in their writing. They will benefit from the planned further practice in writing using the features of different genres. Most children at second level create texts within a variety of genres,

using language features appropriate to purpose. They would benefit from further practice in using language to influence or persuade the reader.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children are making very good progress.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, most children successfully recall number sequences backwards within 20. They should continue to develop their addition and subtraction skills in simple money problems. At first level, almost all children confidently round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They were less confident at demonstrating understanding of simple equivalent fractions. At second level, most children successfully compare costs and determine affordability within a given budget. They should continue to develop their knowledge and skills in calculating percentages of a quantity in problem solving contexts.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, most children recognise, describe and sort three-dimensional objects according to various simple criteria. At first level, most children successfully recognise two-dimensional shapes within three-dimensional objects. They are less confident at describing and recording directions using words associated with angles. At second level, almost all children describe three-dimensional objects using specific mathematical language.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, most children successfully interpret simple graphs and charts. At first level, most children use charts and bar graphs to gather and present data. At second level, almost all children successfully analyse and draw conclusions from a variety of sources. Children at first and second level should continue to develop further their information handling skills through using digital technology in real life contexts.

### **Attainment over time**

- Overall, most children are making good progress over time from prior levels of attainment. A few children are making very good progress. The school is raising attainment continuously over time. Staff use the tracking system to monitor the progress of individuals, groups, and cohorts of children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children receive prompt additional support, if required. This is helping them to make good progress in their planned learning.
- Staff use a variety of interventions well to raise attainment in writing and numeracy. In writing, there are early signs of improvement as children progress from previous levels of understanding. Staff have implemented a range of effective interventions this year to raise attainment in numeracy at P5 and P6. Staff should continue to develop this approach to target gaps in children's learning and raise attainment for individuals and cohorts across the curriculum.
- Staff are at the early stages of tracking progress of children's learning across all curricular areas. They should now review and track children's progress more frequently. This will help identify effectively where interventions and support are needed, to ensure continuous progress for learners across all curricular areas.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Staff have worked effectively to ensure children have opportunities to be members of school committees. Children's active involvement in these initiatives is helping them to develop

important social and organisational skills. Staff should explore how to offer more pupil leadership opportunities across the school, particularly for younger children. They will help a greater number of children to develop further their skills for learning, life and work.

- Children's achievements in school are encouraged at a wide range of skills-related clubs which take place before school, during breaks and at the end of the school day. Staff organise transport as appropriate, to ensure that there is equity of access to these important achievement opportunities. All children in P6 and P7 participate in the Pope Francis Faith Award. Children develop their leadership skills by promoting the availability of second-hand school uniforms and by supporting the local foodbank.
- Children's achievements are acknowledged and celebrated by staff. For example, their out of school achievements are shared with other pupils at the weekly assembly. Children get the opportunity to talk about their achievement and this is later acknowledged by placing their star on the SHINE board. Parents are aware of the achievements initiative and support this celebration.
- School staff record the participation of children in different clubs which are run in school. Staff should now use this information more strategically to identify children at risk of missing out.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff take the cost of the school day into consideration when organising activities and experiences for children and try to keep costs down for families. Money raised by the Parent Council is used to subsidise these activities as required. The school also makes uniforms available for families.
- The impact of PEF initiatives in previous years has been difficult to demonstrate due to the lack of refinement in targets. As a result, senior leaders are not yet able to demonstrate that they are accelerating progress and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Senior leaders' and staff's planned focus is now on improving family engagement with the school, and implementing interventions to improve literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have planned actions which can be tracked across the school.

## 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.