

Summarised inspection findings

St Louise Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

21 November 2023

Key contextual information

Saint (St) Louise Primary School is a Roman Catholic co-educational school for children aged five to 12 years. The current role of the school is 174 children, organised into seven classes. The headteacher has been in post since 2017 and is supported by an acting depute headteacher.

Attendance figures are in line with national figures. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles four to eight.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- The positive, welcoming ethos and culture of St Louise Primary School is tangible and reflects the school community's commitment to building positive and encouraging relationships for all. Children are happy, confident and highly motivated to develop as successful learners. There is a clear focus on Gospel Values and ensuring children become self-regulated resilient learners. They contribute effectively to the life of the school and the wider community. Children are confident that their views are sought, valued and acted upon within nurturing learning environments.
- Children across the school are highly engaged in their learning and interact very well during activities. They understand that the purpose of learning includes embracing mistakes as learning opportunities. In most classes, children have opportunities to lead aspects of their learning. Learners use digital technology to enhance and extend their learning and teachers create valuable opportunities for children to develop their technology skills. Children across the school are very proud of their achievements in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Their work in technology has been recognised nationally.
- In all classes, teachers know their learners very well and have a clear focus on high-quality learning outcomes. In almost all lessons, learning is enjoyable for children and is well matched to their needs and interests. A few children would benefit from further challenge in their learning on occasion. In most classes, children have opportunities to make choices about how they learn.
- At early level, children's learning is successfully supported through play-based approaches. There is a very good balance of child- and adult-initiated learning. Teachers make effective use of spaces, interactions and resources to support learning as set out in the national guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'. This approach has created a learning environment which supports children to be settled, curious and making independent choices. These high-quality experiences are supported by skilful interventions and questioning. Staff should continue, as planned, to explore how play-based approaches can be built upon throughout the school.

- Teaching in St Louise Primary School is underpinned by a clear vision and shared values. All teachers have a strong commitment to continuous professional learning and are using educational research to improve learning and teaching, and outcomes for children. They share effective practice with each other and work very well as a team. Senior leaders work well with teachers to agree a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. Teachers feel empowered to support each other in developing new and creative approaches. This includes in the use of digital technology, play pedagogy and STEM. Learning is enriched and supported by very effective use of digital technologies, which are well-resourced.
- In all classes, teachers share the purpose of the learning to ensure children have an accurate understanding of their progress and how they can improve. Across the school, all teachers identify how children can be successful. In a few lessons, children are beginning to have useful opportunities to co-construct the measures of success to clarify the purpose of learning. This should be built upon to upskill children to understand how to develop and improve their own learning.
- In almost all classes, explanations, questioning and instructions are clear. All teachers use questioning very well to check for understanding. A few teachers use effective questioning to promote curiosity, independence and higher order thinking skills. Learners receive high-quality feedback about their learning and have an accurate understanding of their next steps. In most classes, children give helpful and sensitive feedback to their peers about their learning and suggest ways in which they can improve.
- All teachers have a strong understanding of the barriers which children may face in their learning. Children with additional support needs are very well supported and challenged to make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Parents feel welcomed into the school and a part of their children's journey of learning. Planned learning is shared termly with parents through newsletters and 'Find out Fridays' where learners' achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated.
- Teachers plan over different timescales using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. They make effective use of progressive learning pathways in almost all curricular areas. Teachers use the National Benchmarks to identify assessment activity at the planning stage. They should continue to explore how learners can be involved in the planning of learning, building on existing strong practice.
- Planning is proportionate, manageable and differentiated to meet the needs of learners. Teachers use a range of assessments to support teaching and learning which is integral to planning. They use a variety of strategies to monitor children's progress and build on their prior learning. Processes for assessment and reporting are highly effective in informing improvements in learning and teaching. Recently, teachers have had a strong focus on children making very good progress over time. When planning, teachers should continue to build on existing good practice to develop learning. They should continue to include opportunities which allow children to apply, extend and deepen learning in a variety of contexts. Senior leaders and teachers should now ensure they incorporate a wider range of high-quality assessments across all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers are developing skills of data analysis focused on improvement. They should continue to build upon this existing practice, considering a variety of different lenses. Senior leaders should support staff to take further ownership of their data at classroom level. This will ensure that high-quality self-evaluation leads to continuous improvement in learning outcomes for all children.

- Teaching staff take part informally in aspects of moderation activity to develop shared expectations of standards. They are now building on prior practice in terms of external moderation, with a focus on raising attainment in writing. Staff should now, as planned, carry out further analysis of current practice in the effective use of moderation within the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. This should include opportunities to work together with staff from other schools within the cluster.

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. Inspectors have identified good practice in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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 across the school is very good. Almost all children across P1, P4 and P7 attained expected CfE levels in listening and talking in 2022/23. Most children across P1, P4 and P7 children attained reading, writing and numeracy at expected CfE levels in 2022/23. There have been considerable improvements in many measures of attainment from 2021/22 to 2022/23. Combined attainment in literacy exceeds the 2022/23 stretch targets set by the local authority and closely matches the 2022/23 stretch targets set by the local authority in numeracy.
- Almost all children who require additional support with their learning are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall attainment in reading and listening and talking is very good. Attainment in writing is good. Data analysis in session 2021/22 identified a decrease in attainment in writing. Teachers introduced new approaches, which have supported a considerable increase in attainment in writing across all levels in 2022/23. As a result, attainment in writing has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children across the school are highly articulate and talk confidently, expressing thoughtful and well-considered ideas and opinions. They listen with respect to adults and to peers. At early level, almost all children are developing very effectively their skills in listening and talking through play. They communicate readily with each other and take turns to contribute their ideas and opinions both in small group and whole class situations. At first level, almost all children listen and respond to the ideas of others respectfully when working in pairs or groups. They ask and answer questions, recall key facts and organise their ideas in a logical sequence well. At first and second level, children support each other to develop their thinking further in a very inclusive way. Almost all children at second level express their considered opinions very effectively. They talk with confidence and are enthusiastic when engaging in discussion.

Reading

- Children at the beginning of early level are developing their skills in phonics and beginning to blend phonemes. They confidently share their thoughts and feelings about stories and other texts in different ways. Children who have achieved first level read familiar texts aloud with expression and fluency. They explain clearly their preferences for particular texts and authors. Children who have achieved second level read with fluency, understanding and

expression using appropriate pace and tone. They make relevant comments about structure, characterisation and setting and are clear about the features appropriate to genre.

Writing

- At early level, almost all children are developing their mark making and writing skills through a range of play experiences. Children working at first and second level write for a range of purposes and audiences. The standard of presentation within written work is high. At first level, most children select relevant and interesting vocabulary appropriate for the context. At second level, almost all children write appropriately in different genres, including extended pieces of writing. Through their considered word choice, children at second level are developing their skills to write in more complex ways which engage the reader. Children should now use their skills in writing to link to other areas of the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics from their prior levels of attainment.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, all children identify, recognise and count backwards from 0-10. The majority count backwards and forwards from 20 accurately with a few children counting backwards and forwards accurately within 100. At first level, almost all children identify accurately the place value of three and four digit numbers and confidently round to the nearest 100. They are developing an effective range of strategies to complete calculations in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. At P2, children are learning to tell the time using half-past on an analogue clock. At P4, children investigate how they use money to pay for items and work out how much change they should receive. At second level, almost all children have very good mental agility, completing calculations accurately, and apply their skills in multi-step calculations. They have a very good understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percentages. At P7, children have a sound understanding of place value and are learning to multiply whole numbers and decimals by 10 in real life contexts and across contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- At first level, children use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects including side, face, edge, and angle.

Information handling

- At first level, children display data in bar graphs and tables and extract key information. At second level, most children have a range of different ways to collect, organise and display data, including using digital technology. They increasingly analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from data.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has developed a robust and effective tracking system which provides carefully selected and relevant data about children's progress and levels of achievement. During the past two years, class teachers have become more skilled at understanding data. At regular tracking and monitoring meetings, senior leaders and class teachers are now together interrogating data much more effectively. This includes attendance at class, cohort and individual level. This is resulting in a comprehensive overview of the progress of all learners; identifying carefully designed next steps and targets for individuals and cohorts. For children who are not yet on track with their learning, staff plan specific interventions to accelerate progress towards attainment of a level, along with measures to evaluate success.

These interventions include digital programmes, supported study sessions, and one-to-one and group sessions with staff. These have supported individual children, including children with additional support needs, to increase their reading and spelling ages. This is helping to ensure that children who require additional support with their learning are making the best possible progress. Staff should continue to develop their skills in analysing data to continue to meet the needs of learners. As planned, a next step is more rigorous tracking and monitoring of attainment across curricular areas other than literacy and numeracy.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are very proud of being a member of the St Louise school community. They enjoy regular opportunities to celebrate personal achievements, for example at assemblies and on the wider achievement wall. They value the 'excellent effort' certificates they receive for exemplifying school values. Staff make effective use of social media to showcase achievements across all aspects of children's learning.
- Older children have valuable leadership roles which enable them to develop a range of personal skills. These include communication, organisation, dedication and commitment whilst building a sense of belonging and pride in their school. Programmes include Junior Road Safety Officers, Pope Francis Faith Award, Missio Champions and STEM opportunities.
- Thorough tracking and monitoring of wider achievements is part of the tracking of all children's progress, including those affected by socio-economic disadvantage. Senior leaders monitor and track achievement to identify where gaps exist and provide opportunities and experiences for all children. Almost all children are members of welcoming and inclusive school clubs and activities such as multi-sports, drama and film. Children themselves highlight improvements in their health and fitness levels, as well as the skills of leadership and team-working they are acquiring as part of wider achievement opportunities.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and all staff have a very strong understanding of the strengths and challenges faced by individual children and their families. They place very high importance on ensuring equity of success for all children. Staff provide a range of well-considered sensitive supports to mitigate any barriers that children and families might face. The headteacher analyses data very effectively to ensure all children have opportunities to succeed and achieve. She uses Pupil Equity Funding to target support and improve children's wellbeing and overall outcomes. All staff are able to demonstrate an increase in the percentage of children who are 'on track' to attain expected CfE levels for literacy and numeracy. This includes those children who benefit from specific interventions supported by the Pupil Equity Fund and children who have additional support needs. Almost all children involved are benefitting; demonstrating increased engagement, motivation and improved attendance. Staff work very closely and successfully with the Parent Council to promote equity of experience for all children across the school day. As a result, the attainment gap between children who are most disadvantaged, and their peers is reducing.

Other relevant evidence

- 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. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food in schools.
- Children across the school make effective use of the school library as a multi-purpose space. It is a centre of research and a quiet place for individual study, as well as a place where children choose personal reading books. Each class also has a class library.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The importance of partnership working with parents/ carers to provide all children with equitable opportunities to learn

- Parents feel welcomed into the school and very much part of their children's journey of learning. Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure that the cost of the school day position statement incorporates a variety of supports. These are available to all families with the aim of reducing any barriers to learning. The Parent Council helps provide resources, digital equipment, uniforms and financial supports. These strategies help minimise/remove barriers and ensure a sense of belonging and equitable access to learning experiences. Partnership working with the Parent Council has also enabled shared investment in enhancing outdoor spaces and resources. Children have a wide range of opportunities for creative play and a heightened interest and curiosity in learning outdoors.

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.