

Summarised inspection findings

Dalserf Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

19 December 2023

Key contextual information

Dalserf Primary School is located in the village of Ashgill, South Lanarkshire. There are 82 children on the roll organised across four composite classes. The headteacher has been in post since December 2021. A majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Decile (SIMD) 3. About 20% of children in primaries six and seven are registered for free school meals. This is above the local and national averages. Attendance is in line with the national average.

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 and staff place a strong emphasis on fostering caring and respectful relationships, where all children and their families are valued and welcomed. Families feel welcome in the school and staff interactions with children are nurturing and child-centred. Staff know children and their personal circumstances very well and use this information to plan support. The school is regarded as an important part of the local community. The vision for every child to feel welcome, included and supported underpins the work of the school.
- Children, staff and parents were involved in reviewing the school's vision, values, aims and motto at the end of last session. The school's values, which consist of hard work, determination, kindness, respect and teamwork, are evident across the school. Parents, children and staff feel these are relevant to the current context and in line with their aspirations for the school community. Staff refer to the values and motto, 'Aim high and always try', routinely throughout the day. This is encouraging children to use and understand them well. Staff help to embed the values further by including them as part of school assemblies. Children are very proud of their school.
- The headteacher is a caring, visible and effective leader who has a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas of improvement. Since taking up post, she has implemented a number of key actions which seek to improve outcomes for children. These include approaches that improve the learning climate within the school and simplifying approaches to monitor and evaluate progress of learners at a strategic level. This is helping to inform decision making and target support for children. The headteacher now needs to review and manage the strategic direction and pace of change to ensure ongoing continuous improvement. This should support staff to ensure recent changes become embedded as well as maintaining momentum for continued improvement.
- All staff are encouraged and empowered to embrace leadership in the school. All teachers have responsibility for pupil leadership groups and areas of curriculum development. They are a reflective team who are keen to develop their skills. All staff have regular and protected time for professional dialogue to consider the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff seek professional development opportunities actively, and this is agreed through the annual professional review process. They talk enthusiastically about their professional learning and its impact on their practice in such areas as nurture, outdoor learning and play. Staff are sharing

their learning with each other and support colleagues to implement change and improvements. For example, staff have a greater understanding of how outdoor learning can enhance teaching and learning. The work undertaken by staff around nurture is beginning to meet the needs of more children's needs, resulting in greater readiness to learn. The headteacher should continue to develop the capacity of the staff team to lead aspects of school improvements and to ensure everyone takes an active role in leading change and improvement.

- All children contribute to the school community and have a voice in decision making through the pupil council and 'chit-chat' sessions. There are a number of pupil leadership groups including the Eco Committee, Sports' Award, Reading Schools Award and Rights Respecting Schools group. The headteacher and staff recognise the importance of ensuring that all children are offered leadership opportunities to support them to develop their skills for learning, life and work. Children describe how they contribute to school improvement and develop a wide range of skills through participation in these groups and forums. As planned, the headteacher should now include children and parents more formally in school improvement planning and the self-evaluation process.
- The headteacher gathers a range of data to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. She has identified clear priorities within the improvement plan with appropriate timescales for implementation. Most staff are involved in self-evaluation activities throughout the year. The headteacher seeks parental feedback to support their evaluation of the school's work. Most parents indicate the school is well led and managed, reporting that they feel staff know their child well as an individual and help children to feel confident. As a next step, the headteacher should develop processes to share feedback to parents and pupils on how their voice and input has shaped decisions and improvements. For example, through the use of a 'you said, we did' format.
- The headteacher monitors the work of the school effectively. She has created an annual quality assurance and improvement calendar to monitor, track and evaluate the work of the school across the year. This includes sampling children's work and visiting classes to observe learning and peer observations. In addition, she has termly discussions with teachers regarding children's attainment, progress and achievements. As a result, resources are being deployed effectively to meet the needs of children across the school. The headteacher works with other school leaders in the cluster to plan joint learning activities, such as the P6/7 residential trip and sporting activities. As planned, she should now look to develop further collegiate working across the cluster. This should include aspects of improvement around learning, teaching and assessment through moderation.
- All staff have a good understanding of the school's social, economic and cultural context. They are aware of the challenges families are currently facing as a result of the rising cost of living. Staff have a good understanding of the school's poverty-related attainment gap. The headteacher has a strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to target support for individuals and groups of learners. There is evidence that this is supporting children well and helping to reduce the attainment gap for specific children. These approaches are leading to greater equity for learners.

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

- Staff have created a positive and supportive learning environment for children. They model the newly refreshed school values and promote a supportive ethos across the school. Staff have developed positive relationships and most children feel respected. In each class, children and staff have worked together to develop class charters. Children are proud of their school and discuss what they enjoy about different aspects of school life. In most lessons they respond positively to their teachers' expectations and encouragement. As a result, most children are polite and respectful to each other and to adults.
- In most lessons, children interact positively with each other and engage well in their learning. Staff provide regular opportunities for children to work in pairs and groups. In a few lessons, staff should develop further children's skills in how to work well together. This would help to increase learning time and improve children's engagement in learning.
- Staff have helpfully introduced target setting with children. Children record their progress towards their targets in learning logs. This is beginning to help them better understand their progress in learning. They should now be given greater choice and opportunities to set targets and evaluate their progress. This will allow them to take increased responsibility for their own learning and become more independent and confident learners.
- All children learn across a range of indoor and outdoor environments which motivate them. They use well-presented displays to celebrate and support learning. Children are proud of their work on display. They have access to a range of books in the attractive school library. This encourages children to develop their reading for enjoyment and reading skills.
- All teachers use digital technology, such as interactive screens, successfully to support class lessons. Children use digital devices confidently to play games to reinforce learning, undertake research and for word processing. The introduction of the local authority's digital progression pathway should help to ensure that children build on prior learning and develop digital skills more progressively.
- Staff are at the early stages of providing a range of learning through play experiences for children, particularly in P1. Teachers should continue to develop their shared understanding of play and engage with national practice guidance. This should help to develop further their understanding of the relevance of play and help to plan for quality interactions, spaces and experiences. In turn, this should support children to access and lead play freely, consolidating and exploring new learning.
- The headteacher and staff have developed a helpful learning, teaching and assessment position statement which aims to ensure consistency in teaching and learning across the school. This statement lays out clearly expectations regarding the quality of learning and

teaching. This is not yet being used effectively. The headteacher and staff should now review this statement and ensure it is embedded consistently across the school to support teachers to improve the pace of learning.

- In most lessons, teachers provide effective feedback to children to help them progress in their learning. The purpose of learning and steps to success are shared with children in most lessons. Staff should incorporate greater pupil voice into shaping and agreeing success criteria. This can help increase engagement and help make the skills being developed explicit for children. Teachers have implemented a marking code. This is helping to provide consistency across the school in the feedback children receive. In writing, children have opportunities to self-assess and in most written texts, teachers provide helpful feedback on strengths and areas to develop.
- Staff have developed approaches to outdoor learning and are now providing children with a range of experiences, including the use of loose parts. This is helping children learn about nature and their local environment. Most children are increasing their awareness of managing risk though their play and outdoor experiences.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to engage whole classes and groups, and to check children's understanding. In a few lessons, teachers extend these questioning techniques to support and challenge children's thinking skills.
- The headteacher and staff have developed an assessment overview to coordinate the timing of assessments across the school. Teachers plan a range of assessments in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They recognise how these assessments support professional judgements on children's attainment and progress. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of how to make best use of assessment information to directly influence teaching and learning. This will help ensure that all children experience appropriate challenge in their learning.
- Teachers plan effectively over different timescales. They plan creatively and responsively to meet the needs of children well and to build on prior knowledge and skills. The headteacher has developed a whole school tracking system to monitor effectively children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff use this data well to support their termly discussions about the progress of all children. Staff use tracking data to measure the impact of interventions and to inform improvement priorities such as the recent focus on writing as part of plans to improve literacy.
- Teachers collaborate well to moderate children's work across stages within the school. This is helping to build their confidence and develop their professional judgement. As planned, the headteacher should continue with moderation activities across the learning community and seek opportunities to include external colleagues. This will develop further staff understanding of national expectations and support more robust judgement of levels of attainment.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use a range of local authority planning pathways linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and national benchmarks to plan progressive learning experiences. They recently evaluated their planning pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use these to ensure children build on prior learning experiences and provide appropriate progression.
- The school's curriculum is based on a commitment to recognising children's rights and wellbeing. Staff should now work with the whole school community to refresh and revisit their curriculum rationale to ensure it reflects the unique context of their school.
- Teachers received training in outdoor education and all classes have regular opportunities to learn outdoors. These activities are often pupil led and children are well supported to develop and learn new skills which can be transferred into new contexts. This supports children's wellbeing and helps children to develop a range of skills, such as curiosity, problem solving, creativity, independence and risk assessment.
- Children learn French from P1 to P7. The headteacher should take forward plans to introduce a more consistent approach to the implementation of Scots across the school. This will ensure children experience a 1+2 languages approach.
- Children receive their entitlement to Religious Education (RE) each week.
- Transitions in and out of the school and across stages are planned well. Teachers share information to ensure transitions to new classes are smooth. The headteacher should now work with pupils to ensure that their voice is reflected in the transition paperwork.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The Parent Council is beginning to enable greater stakeholder involvement in school improvement. The headteacher and staff's work with parents on self-evaluation for self-improvement is at the early stages. The headteacher and staff recognise the importance of seeking and acting on the views of parents to inform effective decision making. The development of this partnership working will impact positively on children and families in the Dalsersf PS community.
- The headteacher and staff use parental feedback from curricular afternoons, online surveys and the 'feedback box' to seek the views of parents and carers. Parents would like more information about how their views are used to shape decisions around improving learning provision for their children.
- Almost all pupils are represented at parents' evenings. Staff offer parents guidance and strategies to support learning at home during parent consultations. This is contributing to a better understanding of how children learn and how staff, parents and carers can work collaboratively to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. Parents would like further feedback on how children are learning and developing and on how to better support children's learning at home. The planned class showcases can enhance parental engagement further and provide a valuable opportunity for parents to learn more about learning and teaching in their child's classroom.
- Parent volunteers assist with outings, fundraising and the uniform shop. The headteacher is seeking actively to increase parent volunteers to increase parental engagement and support the life and the work 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

- All staff have established a nurturing, supportive learning environment which embodies the school's values. This creates positive relationships amongst children and staff. The school values are visible in interactions and in the work and life of the school.
- Adults treat children with respect and the majority of children feel that their peers treat them respectfully. Children know that they have key staff members that they can talk to. Children learn appropriate key skills linked to wellbeing, including internet safety, through progressive experiences across all stages.
- Teachers are developing and reviewing the school's health and wellbeing (HWB) curriculum. There is a progressive learning pathway in place across all stages to ensure coverage of all HWB experiences and outcomes. This helps to ensure that children's learning and wellbeing needs are being met effectively.
- The headteacher and staff have worked to develop a wellbeing and relationship position statement. This helps to promote a consistency in approaches to encouraging and reinforcing good standards in behaviour. Children have opportunities, where appropriate, to engage in restorative conversations and this is helping them to reflect, regulate and reset behaviours. Staff know that appropriate behaviour is an important factor in ensuring the wellbeing of children and staff. Staff should now gather evidence to illustrate the impact of these approaches and use this data to inform future interventions aimed at enhancing the climate of learning within the school.
- All teachers have health and wellbeing displays in their classrooms. Language linked to emotions is symbolised, displayed and used to support teaching and learning to help children better understand their feelings and emotions. Assemblies are used to promote an understanding of 'growth mindsets' and how to identify and regulate emotions. Children are developing their knowledge, understanding and the language of children's rights through school and classroom charters and through their work towards achieving a Bronze Rights Respecting School Award. As a result, children are developing a greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities. Staff should make more reference to the wellbeing indicators in displays and in lessons. This would ensure that the wellbeing indicators occupy a central position across the curriculum in all classes to help develop children's understanding of their wellbeing entitlements.
- All children benefit from two hours quality physical education each week. Teachers make effective use of outdoors spaces to support aspects of the curriculum. Teachers recognise that there is potential to develop this more fully utilising the extensive grounds and outdoor learning experiences to enrich all areas of the curriculum.

- Children engage successfully in a range of physical activities outwith the school day through partnership working with the active schools' coordinator. These include football, multi-sports and a community dance festival. Children's feedback indicates that they would welcome a wider range of opportunities to participate in clubs and activities. Most children feel that the school is teaching them to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- The headteacher has a good understanding of statutory requirements in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Teachers use the school's effective procedures for identifying and supporting children who may require additional support. This includes the use of additional support plans (ASPs) for a few children. Staff engage well with partners, including educational psychology services. This helps support them in addressing barriers to learning. Staff involve parents in planning meetings. The headteacher should now take forward plans to increase the voice of parents and pupils in the planning process and in setting targets for progress. Staff should now ensure evaluations of these plans are more consistent with a focus on impact.
- The headteacher carefully monitors, tracks, and updates the support provided for children who have additional support needs through the review calendar. All ASPs are mapped across classes and stages. They include, where appropriate, agency involvement, targets, action taken, next steps and a review date. Class teachers are involved in gathering and discussing key information. Planning formats for children with additional support needs are staged following local authority guidance. These provide an effective record of interventions.
- Staff have undertaken professional development work in partnership with South Lanarkshire's Educational Psychology Service to better understand attachment and distressed behaviours. Teachers track and monitor behaviours and where appropriate, they use this information to meet and plan interventions with parents and partners. As a result of professional learning about nurture, staff have adapted all classrooms to provide a quiet area for children to reflect and focus. This approach to developing more inclusive classrooms is supporting teachers to meet the needs of children better at a universal level. Staff should now take forward their plans to assess identified groups of children, plan appropriate support and develop the nurture area within the school. This can support wellbeing and promote greater readiness to learn.
- Beyond universal support, teachers provide personalised and targeted support for children who have more significant additional support needs through discussions with the support for learning teacher or headteacher. For example, the school has developed a range of strategies to address barriers to learning. These include the use of individual physical and online literacy interventions. Most of these interventions are delivered by teachers or pupil support assistants and are evaluated for impact. Staff across all stages use visual timetables and task boards. This is helping to make the curriculum and learning more accessible to children, particularly those who have limited communication skills.
- The headteacher and staff have effective arrangements in place to regularly track attendance and are proactive when attendance levels give cause for concern. They follow local and national policy guidance. Attendance is in line with the national average.
- Children celebrate various cultural occasions throughout the year such as Chinese New Year, Christmas and Burns' day. Children learn about diversity through classwork, school assemblies and through the RE curriculum. The headteacher and staff should now take forward their plans to further develop opportunities to celebrate diversity and incorporate these celebrations into an annual calendar.
- The school has anti-bullying position statement which explains the actions staff take to discourage bullying behaviours. In addition, it outlines measures to support those who experience, and those who display, bullying behaviour. It reflects South Lanarkshire Council's

guidance. The headteacher recognises that this statement needs to be reviewed and refreshed regularly. She should involve pupils, parents, and staff in this process to ensure it is relevant and understood by the whole school community.

- The local authority provides a free breakfast club. This is used well by children and provides a positive start to the day for children who attend.

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. Most children at P1 and P7 achieved expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy in June 2023. At P4, most children achieved expected levels in numeracy and a majority in literacy.
- Attainment data provided by the school indicates that, for the current session 2023-24, overall, most children across the school are on track to achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. There are a few children who are exceeding expected levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. Most children who have identified additional learning needs are making good progress in their individual learning targets.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children who have recently achieved early level hear and say rhyming words successfully. They participate in songs and stories actively and make simple predictions about text. At first level, the majority of children identify the main ideas of spoken texts and discussions and can use the information for different purposes. Children at both early and first level need to develop skills in listening to others' contributions and in taking turns. Most children working toward second level contribute confidently a number of relevant ideas, information and opinions when engaging with others. They would benefit from consolidation in understanding inferential questions.

Reading

- Almost all children who have recently achieved early level successfully use knowledge of sounds letters and patterns to read words. They were less confident of simple features of fiction and non-fiction texts. At first level, most children explain preferences for particular texts and authors. The majority can read aloud adding expression and can show understanding. They would benefit from further consolidation in identifying and finding key information from texts. Almost all children working toward second level read with fluency, understanding and expression using appropriate pace and tone. They skim and scan text successfully to read and understand texts. They would benefit from developing further their understanding of techniques used to influence the reader, for example, word choice, emotive language and repetition.

Writing

- Most children who have recently achieved early level use a capital letter and full stop in writing. They leave a space between words. They would benefit from further consolidation in writing to reflect their own experiences and feelings. At first level, the majority of children begin sentences in a variety of ways, using interesting vocabulary to engage the reader. They were

less confident at organising ideas in paragraphs. Children would benefit from writing extended pieces more regularly and have an opportunity to edit and update their writing, applying what they have learned from teacher feedback. Most children, working toward second level, make good use of notes and plans to organise ideas and information successfully in written work. Consolidation around the use of language, to influence or persuade the reader, will further improve writing skills.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. Most children who have identified additional learning needs are making good progress in their individual learning targets in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Most children who have recently achieved early level, order numbers forwards and backwards to 20 and can identify a missing number in a sequence. They use one-to-one correspondence to count a given number of objects to 20 and use the language of before, after and between confidently. They are less confident sharing items into smaller groups or reading analogue times from a clock face. At first level, most children demonstrate an understanding of place value and round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. When adding and subtracting, they select from a growing range of known strategies and justify their choice. Children would benefit from further practice ordering fractions and finding a fraction of an amount. A majority of children working towards second level demonstrate increasing accurate mental agility. They read and record times in 12 hour and 24-hour notations and convert between the two. They require more practice understanding and applying the links between decimals, percentages and fractions.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children who have recently achieved early level recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects according to various criteria including straight, round, flat, curved. They would benefit from further opportunities to develop their understanding and use of the language of position and direction. At first level, most children use positional language associated with direction and turning. They should continue to develop their confidence and understanding when describing the properties of two-dimensional shapes using appropriate mathematical language. A majority of children working towards second level describe confidently three-dimensional objects and two-dimensional shapes using specific vocabulary and have an increasing understanding between three-dimensional objects and their nets. They are less confident discussing and identifying angles.

Information handling

- Most children who have recently achieved early level, use knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort different items. They use early counting skills to answer questions about information they have gathered or from a simple display. At first and second levels, most children extract key information and answer questions from a range of bar graphs and tables. Across the school, children would benefit from regular practice collecting, displaying and discussing meaningful, real-life data in a variety of ways including through the use of digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has introduced a robust tracking system that enables staff to monitor the progress of individual children in literacy and numeracy over time. The headteacher identifies rightly that attainment over time data demonstrates some inconsistencies. Overall, data shows that most children maintain their progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers and support staff provide a range of targeted interventions which have helped to raise children's attainment. The headteacher has correctly identified writing as an area for

whole school improvement. She should continue to support teachers to develop their understanding of national standards and build confidence in making professional judgements on children's progress and achievement across the curriculum. This will improve the accuracy of their attainment data and reflect better the successes children are making in their learning.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- All children have regular opportunities to share their achievements both in and out of school within the weekly assembly, at the annual celebration events and on social media. Their achievements are valued and shared with the school community. Staff recognise and commend learners who have embodied one of the four CfE capacities through the weekly certificates in assembly.
- Children play an active role within their school and local community. They participate in a range of school committees and groups and visit the local nursing home at set times of the year. As a result, they are developing their skills for learning, life and work. There are further opportunities to increase links with community including the weekly pensioners' lunch club in the school community wing. The headteacher identifies children who are at risk of missing out by monitoring participation. She is now in a position to develop further the tracking of skills children are acquiring.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a good understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. The whole school community is committed to ensuring equitable provision for all children. Children, staff and parents work together to ensure that all activities, including clubs and trips, are accessible for everyone. The headteacher consulted with staff, parents and children to agree on how to use a percentage of the overall PEF allocation using a participatory budgeting approach. They have used their allocation to purchase a range of resources to help raise attainment in literacy and numeracy to support children's wellbeing. These resources are being used to provide both universal and targeted support for children across the school. The headteacher should continue to consult more widely with pupils, staff and parents on how best to invest equity funding. Staff should monitor the impact of initiatives on outcomes for children to ensure that the school continues to make appropriate progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap and accelerate progress.

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.