

# Summarised inspection findings

**Deerpark Primary School**

Clackmannanshire Council

3 September 2024

# Key contextual information

Deerpark Primary is a non-denominational co-educational school situated in the Sauchie area of Alloa. It serves the catchment area to the east of the village of Sauchie. The school is a mixture of open-plan areas and traditional classrooms. It shares the site with Lochies School; a school for primary aged children with severe and complex needs. The headteacher took up post four years ago, following a period of significant disruption for the school. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, a depute headteacher, two principal teachers (1.8FTE) and a Home School Liaison Officer.

Children move to Deerpark Primary from a variety of pre-primary experiences, mostly Sauchie Nursery. Approximately 160 children currently attend the school across seven classes. Almost all children progress to Lornshill Academy after P7.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average, however has declined. There have been no exclusions from 2018/19 to the present date. Almost a third of children have additional support needs. The majority of children live within the most deprived data zones in Scotland.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community</li><li>■ strategic planning for continuous improvement</li><li>■ implementing improvement and change</li></ul>	

- The headteacher, supported well by her senior leadership team (SLT), has worked effectively to create a calm, purposeful learning environment in which children and adults demonstrate mutual respect. She is highly regarded in the school, the community and by staff in the local authority. She demonstrates drive and determination yet leads with humility.
- On taking up post, the headteacher successfully led a consultation to develop a relevant, meaningful vision statement, values and aims for the school. All stakeholders helped create these, which are now firmly embedded in the life of the school. Children articulate the values of 'Fairness, Ambition and Respect' (FAR) very well, have a sound understanding of what they mean and of how they show each of them in their lives. Children enjoy receiving values certificates to celebrate when they have demonstrated the school values well in school. The overarching vision that 'We will travel FAR as a community by working together, embracing our values whilst developing skills for learning, life and work' is meaningful and relevant to children, their families and staff. Senior leaders review the vision, values and aims annually, to ensure that they continue to reflect the changing profile of the school.
- Alongside the vision, values and aims, clear and easily understood school rules of 'Ready, Safe and Responsible' are consistently referred to and applied by all staff. This helps create a very positive ethos across all areas of the school. Children are very proud of their school.
- The SLT promotes and models a collaborative approach to school improvement with all stakeholders effectively. This includes engaging with parents through the parent council, when

considering priorities for the school improvement plan (SIP) and the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plans. The parent council, and the wider parent body, were key partners in developing the recently renewed anti-bullying and learning and teaching policies.

- The school improvement plan follows local authority guidance. Senior leaders have developed a clear plan, following consultation with key stakeholders. This plan sets out specific targets, based on data, which aim to improve outcomes for children around literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The PEF plan is appropriately focused on providing specific supports for children impacted by poverty. This includes providing additional staff, resources and implementation of approaches to improving literacy, numeracy and wellbeing across the school.
- Together, staff regularly review the SIP and PEF plan to ensure progress is being made against short-, medium- and long-term targets. The headteacher monitors the impact and pace of change well across the school, through a well-considered annual collegiate calendar of evaluative activities. Staff are now in a position to increase the pace of change and to make improvements, particularly in attainment for children, more quickly.
- Teachers benefit from well-considered and planned self-evaluation opportunities. This includes opportunities to reflect on both qualitative and quantitative data throughout the academic session. Staff regularly reflect on their 'personal wins in classes, positives across the school and identify their next steps for improvement'. As a result, teachers are developing well their understanding of, and contributions to, the school improvement planning process. Support staff, while not involved to the same extent, appreciate the opportunities they have to contribute to this planning process.
- All staff feel valued, listened to and empowered to lead change. As a result, they eagerly undertake leadership roles such as leading the development of specific curricular areas, the use of digital technologies or supporting children to manage their emotions. Most of these are clearly linked with school improvement plan priorities. Staff are at the early stages of developing approaches to implementing national programmes, for example, Developing the Young Workforce. In going forward, senior leaders should ensure that all leadership roles within the school continue to focus on priorities that will make the biggest difference for children.
- All staff actively engage in the Professional Review and Development programme. This enables all teachers and support staff to regularly reflect on their practice and identify any areas they would like to develop, or indeed share with others. Staff have regular opportunities to share good practice with each other both within and out with the school. Additionally, staff willingly support each other through their role as 'Deerpark experts' in areas such as nurturing approaches and science, technology, engineering and science.
- A few staff recently completed Masters' or degree level qualifications. This is fostering a deep understanding of research-based practice while encouraging staff to develop further their own professional practices. As a result of this enabling approach to learning, the headteacher is successfully building capacity within her staff team. This includes, for example developing a successful coaching and mentor approach.
- A wide range of professional learning relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion such as nurturing approaches, emotional regulation and bereavement and loss, is leading to more effective supports for children with additional support needs (ASN). This is resulting in increased attendance, engagement and attainment for a few children. Staff should continue to develop their awareness and understanding of other aspects of inclusion.

- Staff are working well to increase pupil leadership groups. Children are developing their understanding of leading change by becoming more involved in leading aspects of school improvement. For example, through the recently established Pupil Parliament and the Sports Committee. As a result of these experiences, children are becoming more confident, resilient and are developing a greater understanding of democratic decision-making processes.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

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 quality of relationships and behaviour is very good between all staff and children. This has impacted positively on children's behaviour. Staff have spent significant time helping children recognise and value school experiences. They have invested considerable effort into helping children develop strategies to manage any conflict. As a result, the school ethos is settled and conditions are right for staff to make further improvements to the quality of teaching and children's learning.
- Most children are developing independence and a positive attitude towards their learning. They are developing confidence when working on their own and with others in small groups. The majority of children work well on their own and in small groups. Most children enjoy their learning and share what they like during conversations with others.
- The majority of children engage well in learning activities. They are motivated and keen to do their best. The majority of children learn at a pace which meets their needs. However, across the school there are a few children who finish tasks very quickly and need greater challenge. Children need to have higher expectations for their learning. Staff should increase the pace of learning and the level of challenge to ensure sustained engagement and focus for all learners.
- In most lessons, most children know what they are learning about and what success looks like. This is because most teachers are increasingly giving children clear information and instructions. Children are not yet involved in co-creating success criteria with teachers and other learners. Teachers now need to check for understanding more often with all children as they move through tasks. Teachers should also develop further their use of questioning to help children think through and explain how they reached their answers.
- Teachers plan different experiences for children to learn and apply skills in different contexts., Most children are developing a variety of skills when outdoors exploring their local environment, including to Gartmorn Dam. Others enjoy investigating outdoor spaces within school grounds. Here the children solve problems, for example through using open-ended resources. They are enabled to take risks under careful adult supervision. Staff should continue to develop outdoor learning approaches to enhance the learning experiences for all children.
- Across the school, teachers work well with support staff to deliver learning activities for children. Teachers now need to provide more differentiation and challenge to enable children to make continued progress. They also need to ensure children access a broader range of digital technology to enhance learning, including when outdoors.
- Teachers identify children who require additional support with their learning. Teachers use a wide range of helpful interventions to support children to learn. These are often, but not always, delivered outwith the classroom. Teachers now need to review how they support children's

learning needs more effectively in the classroom. It would be helpful if teachers reviewed the learning environment further to ensure a wider range of supports are more universally available. Teachers should also review the number of transitions in and out of class by children. There are too many interruptions to learning caused by children frequently moving in and out of class to receive support.

- Across the school, play based learning approaches are at the early stages of development. Staff provide younger children with experiences which help children make sense of their learning through play. Staff need to consider how they will deliver more play experiences and plan appropriate activities into children's daily routines. Staff recognise that they need to reflect and agree how they will take forward play pedagogy as a whole staff, including identifying the role of the adult. Staff need to continue to develop their understanding of how children learn and develop. As a whole school team, staff should use national guidance to help them build on the positive start and agree how learning through play can be improved.
- Staff plan children's experiences in almost all curricular areas. Teachers work well with each other to review their planning. This helps ensure children make progress from prior learning. Teachers recognise that they should involve children more when planning learning activities and plan quality experiences across all curriculum areas.
- Teachers use helpful approaches to assess children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This includes useful oral and written feedback. This feedback is helping the majority of children develop an understanding of what they have done well and what they need to improve. Children are encouraged to share their learning through the developing use of plenaries in most classes. The majority of children are developing confidence in evaluating the quality of their written classwork and also that of other children's work using a set of criteria. Teachers increasingly involve children in self- and peer-assessment which helps learners to identify their strengths and what they need to improve in literacy and numeracy. Children are encouraged to help each other when their peers are finding the activities tricky. By P7, most children know their expected targets for their learning in literacy and numeracy. Younger children are less sure of their targets. Teachers need to continue using assessment data to inform their planning and identify appropriate next steps for children's learning and progress, in all curricular areas.
- Teachers are aware of the targets for individual children, however they need to take more responsibility in planning, tracking and monitoring the learning activities and progress for children with additional support needs. They need to ensure that their planning helps children learn progressively by including more detail on how they will differentiate the activities to ensure appropriate support and challenge for all children. Teachers now need to include more detail when setting targets for children with additional support needs.
- Teachers engage in helpful moderation activities, primarily in writing, with others, including from outwith the school. This helps ensure that their professional judgements of achievement of a level in writing are robust and reliable. They now need to undertake moderation activities in other areas to assure themselves that their judgements of children's progress are equally robust and reliable.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers follow progression pathways for almost all curriculum areas to plan and assess children's learning. These pathways ensure children explore knowledge and skills appropriate for their age and stage. As planned, staff should review the curriculum to ensure links to the local context and across the curriculum. This will help ensure that learning is uniquely relevant to and inspiring for the children of Deerpark. Teachers need to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are equally well planned for, and appropriate time is given to them. Staff should also continue to build on the effective partnerships with external agencies. This, along with further development of approaches to play, children's skills development and improvements in the use of digital technology to enhance learning, will help ensure a richer curriculum offer.
- Children in all classes enjoy regular opportunities to learn outdoors, including visits to the local woodland and Gartmorn Dam. Parent volunteers are key to making these opportunities a success. As planned, staff should now develop this offer to provide more opportunities to use the outdoors as a stimulus for learning.
- All children, from P1 to P7, learn French. Children from P5 to P7 also learn Spanish. This supports their transition to secondary school. Going forward, teachers would benefit from further support to deliver this entitlement to a higher standard.
- All children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education (PE), delivered by specialist teachers. Learning in PE from P1 to P7 is appropriately progressive, with support and challenge provided to children as required.
- Teachers provide children with learning about faith, beliefs and morals using the recently introduced Religious and Moral Education (RME) pathway. Senior leaders should consider how the weekly Team Talks (assemblies) could be used to fulfil the national religious observance expectations.
- Staff actively promote reading for enjoyment. Children in all classes have access to a range of books, both in the classroom and from the central 'Book Nooks' (small libraries). Children speak positively about the books they read. As planned, staff should build on this increased enjoyment to raise attainment in reading.



## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Staff have effectively built positive relationships with parents. Most parents are now comfortable approaching staff with questions, suggestions or problems. Parents appreciate the offers of support from staff that help their children attend school and be 'ready to learn'.
- Parents and families are invited to a number of opportunities in the school to find out about or be involved in their children's learning. Parents appreciate, for example, the Stay and Play sessions, Reading café, Team Talks and Cuppa Chat.
- Almost all parents recognise the regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing as being helpful. In particular, the online platform used by senior leaders provides parents with information about school events in a timelier manner. It also gives parents insights into their children's learning in class. A few parents would like more advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- The parent council works well in partnership with the headteacher and staff to support improvements. Whether through fundraising events or contributing ideas, the parent council plays an active role across the school. The parent council and staff are actively seeking greater involvement from more families.



## 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

- Children benefit from the warm, safe, caring ethos and culture within the school. Staff maintain a consistent and strong focus on promoting and enhancing children's wellbeing. Staff work well to develop positive, supportive relationships with children, parents and partners, and between children. Staff have created an environment where children are more likely to develop self-confidence, resilience and positive views about themselves. This helps ensure children across the school show respect and kindness to each other, have a trusted adult they can talk to and learn from consistent and reliable adults.
- All children are encouraged and enabled to consider their emotions and feelings through daily 'check-ins' with their class teacher. This enables teachers to support children well to recognise how they are feeling, and to encourage children to develop empathy for, and understanding of, others. As a result of this, children are more aware of how their emotions impact on their behaviours and are learning ways of coping.
- Staff practise nurturing approaches across the school effectively. Classrooms have specific areas where children access resources and spaces to enable them to relax and reset. Staff provide 'regulation stations' in each classroom to support children to self-regulate their behaviours. This helps children take responsibility for their feelings and behaviour and helps bring a calmness to the learning environment. Where required, teachers use an assessment tool appropriately to support children's social and emotional development. This is used to help identify specific needs of children well and leads to more appropriate supports and interventions for identified children. As a result, the instances of children displaying dysregulated behaviours has reduced over time.
- Children benefit from and engage well in outdoor learning activities, both in the extensive school grounds and in the neighbouring areas. This helps them develop an understanding of their own community, experience nature and be more physically active. Staff should continue to develop these valuable activities to encourage greater independence and responsibility within children.
- Staff work well to encourage children to understand how they can develop a healthy lifestyle. Children have many opportunities to learn about healthy foods, and to take part in regular exercise through PE. A wide range of enjoyable, active games at lunchtimes help children be ready for learning in the afternoon.
- Children do not yet have a full understanding of all aspects which impact on their wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue to consider how the health and wellbeing curriculum can be developed further to better support improvements in children's understanding of their wellbeing.
- All staff understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to the statutory duties and guidance relating to wellbeing, equalities and inclusion. Staff are supported well by a range of partners. Teachers make effective use of a staged intervention process to identify the learning,

and other needs of children. Teachers are not yet planning clearly enough to meet the needs of all children. Staff should ensure that plans to meet the learning needs of children who require additional support for their learning include more specific targets. These plans should also be informed by the views of children and their families. Staff should continue to reflect on their own practices and undertake further professional learning as planned, in areas such as supporting children with dyslexia.

- Staff have developed a wide range of outwith class supports, in different rooms, for children with a range of identified needs. Each room has been designed for a specific purpose. These include a breakout room, a learning lab, an autism spectrum disorder pod, a nurture hub, a Sunshine room and a support for learning area. Support staff work with and help individual and small groups of children in these areas. Currently there is an over reliance on supports from outwith the classroom which impacts on class teachers overall awareness of children's progression. Senior leaders should now consider fully the impact of the wide range of interventions offered, particularly those that are delivered outwith the class, to ensure that children are supported in the most effective manner.
- Care-experienced children are regularly considered for a Coordinated Support Plan. Staff should now consider providing more support for children who may be Young Carers.
- Staff continue to ensure a relentless focus on improving attendance of children at school. Senior leaders regularly share information with parents about the impact of both poor timekeeping and non-attendance at school. None the less, attendance at school remains a concern for a significant number of children. More than a third of the children currently attend school for less than 90% of the time. Staff have identified specific families who require additional help getting their children to school regularly and on time. Staff, working with these families, plan bespoke packages of support, tailored to family's needs. Each targeted intervention is planned with the family and supports put in place to ensure the best outcome for the child and their family. This is leading to improved attendance for a few children. Staff have appropriate plans in place to introduce 'Attendance HEROs' (Here, Every day, Ready to learn, On time) and a walking bus, to further encourage attendance at school.
- 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 and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the school.
- Most children and the majority of their parents believe that bullying is dealt with well by staff in the school. The SLT led a fully consultative and collaborative approach to developing the updated anti-bullying policy, including a useful child-led, child friendly policy. This has led to a greater understanding of the importance of being kind to each other and to STOP (Start Telling Other People). Staff ensure there is a strong focus on a restorative approach across the school. Consequently, instances of bullying and discriminatory behaviour are declining.
- Children learn about their rights in classes and through Team Talks. Across the school articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children are clearly displayed and regularly referred to. This is leading to a culture where the rights of all children are valued, respected and understood.

- Children learn about issues relating to equality and discrimination through their in-class experiences such as RME and Team Talks. The recently established, pupil-led, 'Diversity group' is also helping to raise awareness of such issues among children. As a result, children are developing an awareness of different cultures and religious festivals. Children are developing well their appreciation of the importance of equality and fairness.
- Children have conducted a helpful audit across the school to identify where improvements could be made to the range of texts and books available to them. They have identified where improvements could be made to increase the diversity of written materials. Staff should continue to provide meaningful experiences for children to learn from and with each other, and to develop learning activities which promote diversity and challenge discrimination. This should lead to children being able to challenge discrimination, prejudice and intolerance when they come across it.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

**satisfactory**

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, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Most children attain expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in listening and talking, and the majority attain expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Across the school, children need to make better progress in literacy and numeracy.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- At early level, most talk confidently to other children, sharing stories and facts. A few need to continue to develop their skills in listening to others. At first level, the majority listen well to adults and peers. They contribute well to conversations and discussions. At second level, the majority contribute helpfully to class and group discussions, offering relevant ideas and suggestions. They are developing confidence in speaking aloud in front of larger groups. At all levels, more children need to develop better skills in listening and talking.

### Reading

- At early level, the majority of children are developing appropriate skills in early reading. They know different letters and are increasing the range of words they recognise. They use pictures and illustrations appropriately to make sense of unfamiliar texts. At first level, the majority of children are becoming confident readers. They understand the importance of engaging the listener when reading and use punctuation helpfully as prompts for expression. At second level, children know which reading materials they like and why. They discuss different genres. At all levels, more children need to attain expected standards in reading.

### Writing

- At early level, the majority of children are developing helpful writing skills. They write letters, words and form simple stories from a few sentences. They use simple punctuation correctly. At first and second levels, the majority of children write well for different purposes, using grammar and punctuation well. At second level, the majority use appropriate structures and language to make their work interesting. Across the school, teachers should have higher expectations of children's handwriting and how they present their work.

### Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children achieve expected CfE levels in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children have gaps in their mathematical understanding. Across the school, children need to regularly revisit and apply numeracy and mathematics in different contexts.

## **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, the majority of children form numbers correctly. They carry out simple addition and subtraction calculations within 10. They are developing an awareness of time and an understanding of measure. At first level, the majority of children count in multiples of 2, 5 and 10 competently. They now need to explore the patterns in these multiplication tables. Children calculate and write fractions of a shape, simplifying the answers. They are not as confident calculating fractions of a quantity. At second level, children enjoy adding and subtracting decimals, up to two decimal places. They understand and use negative numbers in simple contexts. Children need to apply this knowledge when solving multi-step problems. Children convert time from 12 to 24-hour format but are not as confident calculating the duration between times.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, the majority of children identify and name basic shapes such as circles, triangle and squares. They use simple language to describe position, for example beside and opposite. At first level, the majority of children describe a range of 2 dimensional (2D) shapes and 3 dimensional (3D) objects, using appropriate vocabulary including faces, edges and vertices. They recognise a right angle but need more practise to identify different angles. At second level, the majority of children draw and describe the features of a circle with reference to circumference, diameter and radius. They calculate the perimeter of a shape but need support when calculating the area of 2D shapes and the volume of 3D objects.

## **Information handling**

- At early level, most children are developing an understanding of displaying information in a graph. They answer simple questions about these graphs. At first level, children use class learning to gather information and create bar graphs. They are developing an understanding of Venn diagrams. At second level, children are beginning to use technology to present data in various forms. Children need to broaden their knowledge of different types of graph and how to interpret these. Across all stages, children need more opportunities to display information in different ways and to interpret the information accordingly.

## **Attainment over time**

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy has remained below both local and national averages in recent years, particularly in writing. However, over the past year, children's attainment has improved. Most children are on track to achieve expected CfE levels in listening and talking and the majority in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior leaders do not yet gather reliable information on children's progress in other curricular areas.

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

- Children value their achievements being recognised, including those gained outwith school. Across the school, children are developing important skills by engaging in a wide range of additional roles. These include as junior road safety officers, reading ambassadors and as buddies for younger children. Children are becoming more considerate of others and developing helpful community and citizenship skills through being caring and considerate towards others. Children are improving their sporting skills, for example through a variety of activities and when representing their school at different events. Senior leaders recognise the need to gather and analyse participation and achievement data more effectively to help ensure no child is at risk of missing out from these valuable experiences.

## **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff know children and families very well. They act quickly to address challenges and barriers to children progressing in their learning. Senior leaders' use of PEF is helping to improve children's literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The majority of identified children who have specific needs are achieving personal targets through helpful

interventions in literacy, numeracy and in health and wellbeing. Increasing numbers of children are achieving expected CfE levels through targeted support in reading and writing. Partners contribute well to support children's progress in for example, speech and language.

- Senior leaders have systems in place which enable them to track the progress of individuals and of different cohorts of children. This includes those children who are care-experienced, have an additional support need or who are living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Staff have in place a range of discrete supports for children and families to help them attend school more regularly. This includes snack boxes in each classroom and supports for parents to access additional funding. Staff also ensure that there are no additional costs associated with children accessing the curriculum. As a result, a few children are improving their attendance, attainment and achievement.



## 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.