

Summarised inspection findings

St Patrick's Primary School

South Ayrshire Council

7 February 2023

Key contextual information

St Patrick's Primary School is a denominational school serving the town of Troon. There are 105 children across five classes. 11% of the school roll lives in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 1 and 2 and 11% of P5-P7 pupils are registered for free school meals. Over the last year, there have been changes in the senior leadership team and most of the current teaching staff are temporary to the school due to planned absence.

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

- Across the school, all children and staff understand and uphold the gospel and school values which underpin the daily life and work of St Patrick's Primary School. The school's ethos reflects a clear commitment to children's rights. This is evident in lessons and the rights are displayed visually throughout the school. Senior leaders are providing strong, supportive leadership and direction, and work very well together as a team. Children are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They are supportive and help each other in class, particularly when working in groups and pairs, and across the school. Almost all children are motivated, attentive and engage fully in their learning activities. All children contribute effectively to the life of the school through pupil leadership groups. They are actively involved in planning and making changes which impact positively on school life.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Senior leaders, teachers and support staff regularly engage in professional dialogue with a shared focus on improving outcomes for all children. Teachers' practitioner enquiries support and inform the school's improvement agenda. The open learning environment is calm and purposeful. As a result, almost all children participate very well in lessons. Displays in class and across the school show children's achievements and progress. Currently, children and staff are redesigning the school library to improve the environment and widen reading choices available. To provide children with the best learning experiences across the curriculum, teachers could maximise the use of learning spaces in the school and outdoors.
- In most lessons, teachers' instructions are clear and children understand the purpose of their learning. Most children talk confidently about the knowledge they are developing. Senior leaders and teachers should now support children to make links across their learning. Children would benefit from teachers highlighting the skills being developed during lessons. This will help children identify these skills and understand how they can be applied across learning and in different contexts.
- Most teachers use a range of questioning effectively to engage learners. They plan tasks and activities which are well matched to the needs of almost all learners. A few children would benefit from increased opportunities for challenge. When delivering lessons to the whole class, teachers should utilise approaches that will help pupils to be independent in their learning.

Teachers should also vary time teaching to the whole class, working with groups and individual pupils. Children who require support in their learning are supported well in class and through targeted interventions. Support staff use their skills and training to support children effectively. As planned, senior leaders and staff should continue to develop the school's learning and teaching policy. This will support all staff to develop further a shared understanding of what high quality learning and teaching looks like at St Patrick's Primary School.

- Senior leaders and teachers are embedding digital technology effectively across the school. A few staff achieved certification for their digital knowledge and skills. In the early stages, programmable toys engage children well and support them to develop skills in simple programming sequences and consolidating their understanding of positional commands. In the upper stages, children are becoming confident in using digital technologies to extend their research skills, showcase their learning and, more recently, explore coding. Children enhance and share their skills with others through a coding club. Teachers should continue to develop digital technologies to enrich children's learning experiences.
- At early and into first level, staff are embedding learning through play approaches. Working with the children, teachers co-create the classroom environment to support play-based learning experiences and encourage curiosity. As planned, staff should continue to develop and share further their understanding and approach to play, taking account of national guidance. This supports progressive learning experiences across levels and allows young children opportunities to lead learning and develop further their independence.
- Senior leaders have effective approaches in place to support all children through transitions, such as starting school or moving class. Children who require more time and support are identified early and plans to best meet their individual needs are implemented very well. This helps children to settle quickly to new classes or on to secondary school.
- All teachers use a wide range of summative and standardised assessments to measure and evidence children's progress. The use of assessment information is not yet an integral part of planning approaches. Currently, senior leaders and teachers are developing and extending formative assessment approaches. This will help to judge the pace of children's learning in lessons and across the longer term more accurately.
- At key milestones, teachers evidence children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy using a wide range of data. They use local authority progression pathways well to support this. Teachers and children gather samples of work throughout the year to help inform these decisions and demonstrate progress. Senior leaders and teachers should now aim to assess and evidence children's progress across all curriculum areas.
- All teachers are involved in helpful cluster moderation groups with colleagues that cover a range of curricular areas. They regularly share their developing knowledge and practice with each other. This is supporting teachers' confidence and improving accuracy in making professional judgements on children's achievement and progress.
- Teachers provide a range of written and oral feedback to children. The quality of written comments varies across the school. As planned, teachers should continue to develop feedback to support children's learning and progress more effectively. Children decide and set individual targets for literacy, numeracy and one of their own choice. They should now be supported by staff to create targets that are measureable and linked to transferable skills for life and learning. This will help children to make connections and reflect on their progress more easily.
- Teachers plan learning appropriately across the curriculum. During interdisciplinary learning, children are given opportunities to work with their teacher to plan and shape learning. At the

early stages, children select and plan their play. Newly introduced learner conversations are supporting teachers to take greater account of children's views and understand better how children see themselves as learners. As staff continue to review planning processes, they should consider developing more opportunities for children to be involved in planning learning across the curriculum.

- Senior leaders have established regular useful tracking meetings with teachers. They track and record children's progress and attainment effectively. This supports teachers to identify any children who require further support or intervention, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders use a robust digital system well to monitor and analyse children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- At the end of session 2021/2022, in P1, P4 and P7 most children attained nationally expected Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) levels in literacy and English. The majority of children achieved writing at early level. In numeracy and mathematics, all children achieved early level, almost all children at first level and most at second level. Most children requiring additional support are making good progress from their individual prior levels of learning and a few children are achieving nationally expected levels.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Overall, most children are making good progress. Children who have achieved early level talk confidently about familiar stories. They share the part they like best. They will benefit from creating their own questions about texts read. By the end of first level, most children discuss a range of texts well and explain why they find them interesting. They actively listen to the ideas of others. They are less confident in answering inferential questions. At second level, most children articulately discuss texts and communicate well their understanding. They exemplify their views and answer evaluative and inferential questions with growing accuracy. At this level, children will benefit from practice note-taking to create their own texts from information gathered.

Reading

- Most children are making good progress. At early level, all children are exploring sounds and letters and are beginning to recognise simple familiar words. Children, who have achieved early level, read known books with increasing fluency and confidence. They use strategies well to help sound out new words. Across first and second level, most children read a wide range of genres and authors. They talk about their books with enthusiasm, predict what might happen next and discuss characters. Children confidently take on group reading roles, such as 'summariser' and 'questioner'. At first and second level, all children will benefit from planned further practice applying their higher order thinking skills to analyse texts.

Writing

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress. After the pandemic, senior leaders identified the need to support children's writing more effectively at first and second level. As a result, teachers are implementing universal and targeted interventions. These are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of children's writing. For example, most children are including an increasing range of vocabulary in their texts. Children, who have achieved early level, write simple sentences and use basic punctuation. They will benefit from practising a range of spelling strategies to help them write more independently. At first and second level,

most children use 'story maps' to help write texts of increasing length. They are beginning to vary their language more to engage the reader. Working towards second level, children regularly use laptops to create their extended texts. They evaluate their writing through self and peer assessment. Most children are beginning to use this feedback to improve the quality of their texts. They require further practice in reviewing their writing to be technically accurate. At all levels, children will benefit from writing for different purposes across an increasing range of curriculum areas.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics and a few children across the school are making very good progress. Children in P2, P3, P5 and P6 are making good progress towards first or second level in numeracy.

Number, money and measure

- By the end of early level, children are developing confidence when talking through their thinking. Most children use practical materials appropriately and apply a range of strategies when adding and subtracting. They are developing different ways to record their solutions. By the end of first level, almost all children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their stage. They increasingly carry out calculations confidently and accurately. They use correct mathematical vocabulary when discussing their learning. They will benefit from further practice with multi-step problem solving. Most children working towards second level are confident rounding with larger numbers and exploring place value and decimals. They apply their learning and skills in number, money and measure to real-life, practical contexts. They justify their choice of strategy and are becoming more skilled at identifying the most efficient. They are less confident linking concepts across fractions and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- By the end of early level, all children identify familiar two-dimensional shapes well. They use simple language of position and direction confidently during play. By the end of first level, almost all children name, identify and classify a range of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are less confident identifying and describing their properties. Most children working towards second level understand the properties of circles well and use mathematical language confidently when describing and classifying a range of angles. They will benefit from applying and linking this knowledge to the eight compass points when describing, following and recording directions.

Information handling

- At early level, most children apply their counting skills to display information and answer questions from a simple table, such as favourite books. By the end of first level, almost all children can carry out a simple survey, use tally marks correctly to record responses and display results. At second level, most children can analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a variety of data. Across the school, all children would benefit from further practice collecting, organising and displaying data using digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have collated and tracked attainment data for over five years. This information demonstrates clearly that most children sustain good progress moving through the school. Senior leaders apply their knowledge of the school well, when analysing data, and track effectively the progress of children in smaller cohorts and new children entering at different stages. As identified by senior leaders, the pandemic has impacted on the pace of most children's progress and attainment across P3-5. Staff are implementing appropriate literacy and numeracy interventions to raise attainment. Senior leaders, working closely with partners and local authority staff, facilitate further professional learning for all staff to support recovery and raise attainment. Senior leaders record and monitor a wide range of attainment data for

individual children and the whole school. They are beginning to analyse this in further detail for particular groups of children, such as those with barriers to learning.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- P7 children speak confidently about their leadership roles, such as house ambassadors and buddies. They articulate well the value these roles bring to their school. Children achieve success and develop confidence through trips, clubs and activities, such as 'bikeability', sports and the expressive arts. A few children share their national successes with school and these achievements are celebrated. Older children achieve recognition for community work through their Pope Francis faith award. All children develop citizenship skills working closely with charity partners such as the foodbank and Fisherman's Mission. Last session, P6 children developed skills in sustainability achieving their John Muir award. Children work together well to gain national school awards such as silver sportscotland and Fairtrade certification. Children's successes are celebrated during assemblies and through displays, newsletters and digital platforms. Teachers track children's participation in school clubs. They identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out. As planned, staff should support children to identify the skills and qualities they develop participating in activities in and out of school. This will support children to recognise and reflect on their achievements and progress.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and teachers have a strong understanding of the socio-economic context of the school and community. They use this knowledge effectively to inform improvement planning. As a result, the school's Pupil Equity Fund allocation is used appropriately to support the raising attainment strategy for literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders are developing helpful processes to identify and evidence the extent to which the school are closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Teachers are beginning to monitor progress of children with identified potential barriers to their learning towards recently created individual targets. The impact of targeted support on children's outcomes is beginning to narrow attainment gaps in a few areas, such as improved mental maths agility. Senior leaders should develop further measurable ways to evaluate the impact of interventions. This information will help staff to ensure targeted supports are accelerating progress and improving outcomes for all children.
- Senior leaders, working with the Parent Council, ensure that financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for achievement. This supports all children to be included. Many parents make good use of the school's pre-loved uniform stall. The church community and local businesses work in partnership with senior leaders to provide support to families. This is improving children's health and wellbeing.

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.