Summarised inspection findings

Our Lady of the Missions Primary School

East Renfrewshire Council

30 April 2019

Key contextual information

Our Lady of the Missions Primary School is situated in the Thornliebank area of East Renfrewshire. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 905 children from P1 to P7. The school has very close links with the associated early learning and childcare setting and secondary school to ensure consistency of curriculum design, learning pathways and children's progress from age 3 to 18. The school comprises of two buildings linked by an enclosed corridor with classes organised into three departments. The management team includes a headteacher and three depute headteachers. Each of the deputes has responsibility for one of the departments i.e.: infants, middle school and upper school. The senior school depute headteacher has been in post for a short period of time.

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 school has an inclusive ethos and we observed children clearly enjoying being at their school. Gospel values and positive relationships permeate the daily life and work of this community of faith and learning. Children demonstrate a good understanding of how Gospel and school values are linked to the school house system and support them to develop and practise respect for themselves and others. They welcome the opportunities they have to take responsibility for their learning. They contribute ideas and make suggestions about what they would like to learn. Their involvement in committees enables them to positively influence decision making about the life and work of the school. There are many examples of children leading their own learning through, for example, collaborative approaches. Teachers are exploring different ways of developing further opportunities for children to lead learning for themselves and others.

■ In classes, most children cooperate well with each other and most demonstrate good talking and listening skills when working with others in pairs or groups. Class lessons are productive and children engage very well in purposeful collaborations that extend their learning. However, in a few instances when younger children disagree, they do not always demonstrate effective skills in resolving their differences. In a few lesson observations, we found that noise levels in some of the learning environments made it difficult for a few children to hear the teacher.

■ Teachers plan lessons well to include differentiated tasks and activities for groups and individuals to meet their needs. Most children engage enthusiastically in the tasks they are given and are motivated to succeed. In a few lessons, learning does not always offer sufficient challenge to all children and a few children are not fully engaged in learning or clear on the purpose of the activities.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers give clear explanations and instructions. In most classes, they make effective use of questioning to support children to develop higher-order thinking skills. In the best examples, children are supported and encouraged to develop their own questions to

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help them extend their understanding. In a few lessons, teachers' explanations are quite lengthy and instructions are given to the whole class.

■ Across the school, there are many good and at times innovative uses of digital technology that enhance learning. These provide effective digital solutions to extend learning that is not normally accessible and support children's additional learning needs. The use of netbooks is integrated very well into learning across the school. The further growth of mobile technology use has enhanced the school's digital resources. For example, young children enjoy exploring the Great Barrier Reef using virtual reality headsets. This experience improved the quality of vocabulary used in their story writing about a deep sea dive. The school is now well placed to make effective use of a wider range of digital applications. Software programmes have varying impact across the school. It is not always clear that children's levels of digital skills have been assessed in order to provide learning which is appropriately differentiated to suit their needs. As a result, digital technology for a few children does not support children well enough to develop and consolidate identified skills.

■ Commendably, all teachers are involved in professional inquiry projects. These projects are very well aligned with the needs of learners, school improvement priorities and teachers' professional learning and development. Teachers can clearly demonstrate the impact of professional inquiry projects on improving learning outcomes for children. There are regular opportunities for teachers to share their professional learning and to benefit from collaborative working. They need to ensure, however, that new approaches and interventions are fully understood in order to maximise their effectiveness. For example, there needs to be a clearer, shared understanding of the use of 'Playful Pedagogy' to extend the learning of children who are engaged in child-led learning to develop fully opportunities arising from play into effective learning. Staff should ensure there are more effective interactions between adults and children to extend their learning through play.

■ Assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. A range of formative, summative and standardised assessments are used to inform and validate professional judgement. By using a variety of assessment approaches, children's knowledge and understanding of skills, attributes and capabilities across the curriculum are being identified. Teachers have regular opportunities to moderate children's work, both within school, and with cluster and local authority colleagues. This participation in moderation activities is ensuring that staff have a shared understanding of standards across the curriculum. Teachers feel confident in their understanding, and use, of assessment data.

■ Children consistently reflect on their own work. They receive high quality feedback to support their understanding of progress within literacy and numeracy. They are involved in self- and peer-assessment activities. The recent development of profiling at second level is encouraging children to reflect on their learning across all curricular areas. Blogs are used with younger children to promote reflection of learning. Building on this very positive start, there is scope to develop further children's skills in understanding their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve across the curriculum.

■ Teachers, working across the same stage, plan together on a weekly basis. They value this time, using it productively to share knowledge and skills. Discussions about examples of children's work are used during these meetings to inform the planning process. The very effective use of an electronic system supports this collegiate forward planning approach. As a result, a highly consistent approach to planning across the school has been established. Due account has been taken of reducing bureaucracy when developing this digital approach, making the planning process proportionate and manageable.

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■ Progressive curriculum pathways are in place across all curricular areas. These identify bundles of experiences and outcomes, relevant skills, and benchmarks. Teachers use these curriculum pathways effectively to inform planning. These provide flexibility, enabling teachers to meet the learning needs of groups and individuals. Teachers can also respond to topical events or interests of the class with learning supported by the curriculum framework. Planning across the four contexts for learning is clear and children's involvement in these are carefully tracked. Children are actively involved in planning their learning. Teachers take children's interests and ideas into account when planning inter-disciplinary projects. Children are asked what they already know, and what they would like to learn. Teachers then plan to assess against this at the end of the topic.

■ The online accessibility of planning enables senior leaders to monitor the learning and teaching taking place across the school on a regular basis. By embedding a link to forward planning within the schools digital tracking systems, children's progress in literacy and numeracy is clearly identified. This helps inform termly professional dialogue meetings between senior leaders and teachers. A rigorous and robust tracking system ensures that teachers and senior leaders have a very clear understanding of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. The pace of learning is also monitored. There is scope to extend this system to manageably include other areas of the curriculum. However, children are less clear about their progress in health and wellbeing and the monitoring systems are less rigorous to track this progress. As a result, the questionnaire responses reflected a few wellbeing issues such as perceptions about feeling safe and the schools approaches to anti-bullying that the school agreed to prioritise and improve.

■ Planning for children with additional barriers to learning is highly effective. Robust tracking systems in place ensure that the individual needs of children are being met. Staff know children very well, and use a range of data effectively to ensure the effectiveness of interventions. This informs the strategic planning and the deployment of staff and resources. Progression for children with barriers to learning in literacy and numeracy are closely monitored. We asked the school to review some of the very good approaches to wellbeing in place for children and their parents with known barriers to learning to be applied more universally.

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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.

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3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	excellent

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 are making excellent progress in literacy and English language and in numeracy and mathematics. Children's attainment and the quality of their work across the school is sustained, enhanced and of a very high standard. Data from 2017-18 shows that almost all children at P1, P4 and P7 achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy.

- The Senior Leadership Team make very effective use of a range of data. They make very effective use of the developmental milestones and baseline assessments from the associated early learning and childcare centre. Standardised assessments, Scottish National Standardised Assessment data and well-embedded moderation activities by teachers across years and stages support teacher judgement effectively.

- During the inspection, we observed children learning at all stages, sampled children's work, engaged in professional discussion with staff, and met with individuals and groups across the school. This range of activity allows us to support teachers' professional judgement across children's learning.

- The school uses very well a range of tracking systems and approaches to monitor children's progress. This includes regular discussions with all class teachers where the progress of individual children and groups is discussed. The local authority produces very helpful data for each school and school leaders use this with success in their discussions with class teachers. The staff are able to compare the achievement of children in Our Lady of the Missions Primary School against children in other East Renfrewshire schools. The progress of individual children and vulnerable groups is closely monitored. Children benefit from targeted interventions that enable them to be on track with their peers as and when required. Commendably this takes full account of their progress before starting P1. Tracking data shows children's learning journey through to leaving the associated secondary school on to their post school destination.

Reading

- Across the school, children have very good opportunities to read for enjoyment. At early level, children can read simple texts aloud and are beginning to develop their reading voice. At first level, children can read fluently and use books for reading for pleasure and to gain new knowledge. Children speak confidently about their favourite books. They are able to explain their preferences of texts and justify why they choose particular novels. They understand inferences and use their knowledge very well to solve a fictional mystery set in the school. At second level, children talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. They can explain their preferences and can comment on some of the techniques used by the author. For example, they are able to comment on characters and setting, and the ability of the writer to create gripping chapters which encourage them to continue to read. There are examples, across the

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school where children regularly read high quality texts across the curriculum. Of note is their ability to describe features of a novel and what interests a person are likely to have to find it appealing.

Writing

■ Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in writing across the school. At the early level in P1, almost all children are confident at 'having a go' at writing. Most children can form letters legibly and are beginning to write simple sentences, starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. Children are beginning to write independently to convey messages and can share information in pictures and using simple text. At first level, children can write about their own experiences and can use, and identify, verbs and adjectives. They can link sentences using connectives and can start their sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader. Children working at second level practise writing in a variety of formats such as letters, newspaper articles, information leaflets, and through creating imaginative stories. For example, children write factual reports about the Northern Lights and write letters to express their thanks to the staff they worked with during their residential trip. Almost all children can write fluently and for a range of purposes using appropriate punctuation and sentence structure. Of note are the skills children have in writing across a variety of very relevant and high quality contexts.

Listening and Talking

■ Across the school, children are articulate and polite. They listen well to teacher instructions and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way. Through class assemblies and pupil leadership activities, children across the school are gaining confidence talking to an audience of parents, teachers and peers. Children use their listening and talking skills very well working with external partners. For example, a few children negotiated with a local business to help create a school scarf in the colours of each 'house'. At early level, almost all children listen well and follow instructions. They can talk confidently about their learning and share ideas with their peers. At first level, children talk clearly and audibly, expressing opinions and preferences. For example, children are able to contribute confidently to a discussion about their favourite reading books. They can take turns and express reasons for their preferences. At second level, children can contribute relevant ideas to group discussions; they can explain their thinking about a topic and can listen respectfully to the views of others.

Numeracy and Mathematics

Attainment in Numeracy

■ Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is excellent. At all stages, almost all children are making progress from their prior levels of attainment with almost all children achieving the expected Curriculum for Excellence levels. Commendably, around a third of the children at P1, P4 and P7 exceed minimum expected levels.

■ The school has had a focus on the recently renewed East Renfrewshire Council numeracy and mathematics strategy and skills planners. Pedagogy is improving through stronger emphasis on conceptual understanding. The impact of these approaches is that there are now more consistent experiences for children with better use of differentiation within lessons. Teachers have flexibility to teach numeracy and mathematics within a well-structured framework. Across the school, almost all children are very confident at explaining their thinking and talking through processes. They are able to explain how they are applying the skills learnt in other curricular areas and in real life contexts.

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Number money and measure

■ At early level, almost all children are able to count confidently forwards and backwards from 20. Almost all have an understanding of mathematical language heavier and lighter, greater than and less than, and can use this knowledge to order weights. Children can recognise 1p, 2p and 5p coins and apply addition and subtraction skills to pay for items. At first level almost all children can use strategies such as rounding, doubling and halving to estimate answers. Almost all children can use mental calculations to work out change from a given amount £5, £10 or £20. Almost all can use the correct notation for common fractions and can correctly name the numerator and denominator. In measurement, most children can select the most appropriate instrument for the task. At second level, almost all children can round whole numbers to the nearest 10,000. Children have a thorough understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. Children demonstrate very well their skills in real life contexts. They can manage budgets by planning for spending their birthday money and arrange the school show. Almost all children are able to carry out money calculations involving the four operations in order to determine the affordability of items given their personal budget. Children in P7 can apply their numeracy skills in the enterprise challenge for the Christmas Fayre.

Shape, position and movement

■ Children working at early level can recognise and describe a range of 2D shapes, are beginning to talk about their properties and can construct repeated patterns from these shapes. Children working within first level are successfully able to identify 2D shapes and 3D objects and correctly identify the properties of both. They can identify, describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. At second level, children are accurately naming and measuring a range of angles. Children can use their knowledge of 2D shapes and 3D objects to create nets of shapes. Most children, with confidence, can use compass points and bearings to describe directions and movement.

Data Handling

■ Across the school, children are developing their understanding of data and how to analyse it through classwork and other aspects of school life such as the P7 residential trip to Lockerbie Manor. At early level, children can use tally marks to collect data and use this to create simple pictograms and bar graphs linked to their class themes. At first level, children gather information using tally marks, analyse and display it appropriately. Children can sort and display numbers using Venn Diagrams. By second level, children can collect a range of data and create bar graphs deciding on the appropriate scale and including a title and appropriate labels for the axis. They are also accurately constructing pie charts to display information. By P7, children are able to draw conclusions about the reliability of data. They can make effective use of technology when creating graphs.

Attainment over time

■ The headteacher and depute headteachers have a very clear overview of attainment over time. This, commendably, takes account of children's progress at early level in the associated early learning and childcare setting and through to the senior phase in secondary school. Children's minimum expected progress is clearly predicted. There is a constant drive from the Senior Leadership Team to support as many children as possible to accelerate progress achieving more than the original predictions. Groups of children's progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked through to their senior phase qualifications. A flexible tracking system shows clearly children on and off track and the work that is put in place to ensure all children are on track or above. Senior managers promote the view of 'no ceiling' on learning and staff are aware of developmental stages of children and how best to support them. Given the school does not have a nursery class on site this is an outstanding approach to ensuring progression from the start of a child's journey in the early learning and childcare setting through to them leaving secondary school and on to a positive post school destination.

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■ Staff make good use of the National Benchmarks in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics to plan and make judgements about children's progress. They are gaining confidence in using the National Benchmarks across all curricular areas. There is strong evidence to show ongoing improvement. Attainment has increased steadily in literacy and numeracy over the last three years. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the progress of all children as they move through the school. Almost all children make very good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

Overall quality of learners achievement

■ Commendably, the school plans very well across all areas of the curriculum. As a result, there are examples of children making excellent progress in their learning within science. At an early stage they understand very challenging concepts. Learning pathways are supported by 'bundled' experiences and outcomes organised as a progression with consultation from the associated early learning and childcare setting staff and the associated secondary school staff. These 'bundles' can be used to support learning across four contexts of learning; Discrete subjects, interdisciplinary learning, achievements and ethos and life of the school and its community. As a result, teachers can use the suggested topics or themes or respond to an area of interest or topical issue within the media at a high standard. Children are assessed within these areas and 'outliers' are identified within the rigorous whole schools planning and tracking system. We discussed with the school, manageable approaches to ensure children continue to develop their knowledge of themselves as learners through tracking their skills, knowledge and understanding across learning. For example, e-portfolios or learning journeys. Children are less confident in talking about their strengths and next steps across the curriculum in comparison to their detailed understanding of themselves within literacy, numeracy and science.

■ Across the school, there is a wide range of opportunities provided for the children to develop and achieve across the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. These include House Captains, Pupil Council, Junior Road Safety Officers, Rights Respecting Schools Steering Group, Digital Leaders, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Leaders, Eco Group, Fairtrade Group, Space Pioneers, Librarians and Guardians of the Garden Group. There is an extensive range of clubs available that take place after school, some of which are pupil led. At times, the individual groups join together and work collaboratively on a particular topic that is relevant to them and can be explored through a different viewpoint. For example, food waste in the lunch room was of interest to three groups and they all formed a view from their own perspective.

■ The school has developed an Achievement Database which tracks children's progress across the four contexts of learning, recording children's wider experiences. This tracking system effectively ensures equity of opportunity throughout the school and enables staff to target opportunities that may have been missed out. This proactive approach ensures all children have the opportunity to develop skills from the wider achievement experiences the school provides. A few of the groups have a clear set of skills progression which relate to their work and there are plans to develop this further into e-portfolios or learning journals.

■ The children from P5 to P7 have very good opportunities to lead and have a very strong voice within the school. They are involved in the school's Standard and Quality process measuring how good the school is at recognising their achievements and what new challenges need to be created. Children talk confidently and enthusiastically about their achievements. The school regularly raises funds for local charities and contributes to improving lives of others in the global community. These achievements are recognised and regularly celebrated at assemblies and displayed on the 'Children on a Mission: We're Reaching for the Stars' display board. Children have a very good understanding about the skills they are developing through the

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'Children on a Mission: We're Reaching for the Stars' framework. Staff use this framework to help children understand how skills can be used in other contexts.

Approaches to equity

- Highly effective systems are in place to track and monitor all children's attainment and achievement very closely. Data clearly identifies groups of children requiring additional support that takes full account of their barriers to learning. As a result, all staff have a clear understanding of each socio-economic context. Wide ranging literacy and numeracy activities are planned, implemented and rigorously reviewed. There is a need to continue to develop these as planned building the capacity of staff to embed these approaches more universally.

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Other relevant evidence

■ The school involves parents and children very well in whole school improvement planning processes. We asked the school to apply this approach to building further on the well-planned approaches to health and wellbeing.

Practice worth sharing more widely

■ Approach to professional learning that is supported by professional inquiry and very well aligned to children's needs, improvement priorities and professional review and development.

■ Tracking and monitoring of children's additional support needs, wider achievements and attainment from early years through to the senior phase in collaboration with the cluster. This includes equity of opportunity.

■ Professional inquiry of gender within STEM activities. Children's attainment in science and their understanding of challenging concepts.

■ Creative approaches in the use of digital technologies to extend learning giving children experiences that would not normally be accessible.

■ Learning journey approaches to wall displays. These provide parents with an effective summary of learning.

■ Sustained, enhanced and high levels of attainment. High quality writing and range of genres. For example, children's motivation to write through 'muddy movers', topical issues, spaces project.

■ Children's involvement in creating questions within numeracy and problem-solving strategies are well embedded and their application of these in real-life contexts.

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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.

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