

Summarised inspection findings

Tinto Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Tinto Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the village of Symington, South Lanarkshire. The school serves the village of Symington and the villages of Pettinain and Thankerton. There has been a school in the village since the 1860s. The current school building opened in May 2018. Ninety-seven children currently attend the school across four classes. The headteacher has been in post for 20 years. She is supported by a principal teacher.

Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) area 6. Children's attendance at the school is generally above the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last nine years. In September 2022, the school reported that 32% of children had additional support needs.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 provides highly effective leadership to the school community. She has established a strong nurturing ethos where all members of the school community are valued and respected. The headteacher is ambitious and relentless in her aim for all children to achieve their best. Staff and parents talk positively about her impact on improving outcomes for children. They value the importance she places on wellbeing and strengthening positive relationships. The principal teacher shares the headteacher's ambitious vision for the school. She is having a positive impact on improvements across the nursery class and school.
- All staff ensure the well-established values are embedded in the work and life of the school. The values of respect, perseverance, caring, trust, equality and honesty are highly visible in classrooms and shared spaces. There is a strong, shared understanding of the values across the community. Children and staff demonstrate well the values in their behaviours and interactions. The values are a key driver in school improvement.
- The headteacher shares the school's improvement priorities with the school community. She has a detailed three-year plan outlining clearly the school's improvement agenda. The headteacher has established a strong culture of ongoing self-evaluation and critical reflection. Children and staff actively engage in termly reviews of progress made towards each improvement priority. All staff and children have a sound understanding of their role in evaluating the work of the school.
- The headteacher gathers the views of parents in a range of ways. She makes changes informed by their feedback. For example, parents recently shared they would like more information about how the school supports children who require additional support with their learning. The principal teacher created an informative presentation that is now available on the school website.

- Teachers value the role of quality assurance activities in developing further improvements in learning and teaching. The headteacher samples children's work, gathers the views of learners and observes learning experiences across the school. Her lesson observations this session have provided staff with feedback on approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy. The headteacher should build on this positive approach to have a sharper focus on high-quality teaching across all areas of the curriculum. Staff are well placed to take this forward using the framework outlining highly effective features of learning and teaching they created with colleagues across the learning community. This should ensure staff build on existing areas of effective practice and continue to improve consistency across all classes and all areas of the curriculum.
- Children's voice in influencing and leading change is a significant strength of the school. All children at P1 to P3 share their views and ideas at stage assemblies. The headteacher uses challenge questions from 'How Good is OUR school?' to structure discussions. All children at P4 to P7 are part of a leadership committee. They are very proud of their role in leading and managing change. The Young Leaders of Learning (YLOL) are responsible for the school improvement priority on skills development. They have created a character, Skills Steve, to help their peers understand the skills they are developing through their experiences at school. The YLOL work with a group from another primary school to extend this work across the learning community. Children are clear about the difference they are making, and why this is important to the school and their community.
- All staff engage in relevant and meaningful professional learning and research. They make effective use of the professional review and development process to identify targets linked to the school improvement plan as well as personal areas of interest. Commendably, all teachers have engaged in accredited courses to support the use of technology across the curriculum. As a result, staff are at the early stages of sharing their practice more widely to support improvement at a national level. This includes providing training and support for colleagues across Scotland. Support staff have engaged in relevant training to support a range of interventions and new approaches to teaching writing. They are skilled in helping class teachers with the planning and delivery of learning and targeted support. This is having a positive impact on staff morale and contributes to the strong team spirit. All staff are proud of their role in driving forward change and improvement.
- The Parent Council play an important role in fundraising to support children's learning and achievement. The funds raised and monies from successful grant applications contribute towards school outings and resources. This greatly enhances children experiences and ensures no child misses out. The Parent Council recently moved their meetings to a hybrid model. This allows more parents to join meetings and contribute to discussions about the school. The headteacher provides the Parent Council with regular updates about school improvements. She should continue to work with the Parent Council to involve them more fully in evaluating the work of the school and influencing improvement priorities.
- Parents influence how the school uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) through the participatory budget process. They prioritised using PEF to remove any potential barriers to children engaging fully in the wider experiences of the school.

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

- Children learn in a caring, supportive environment. They experience positive, nurturing and mutually respectful relationships with adults and their peers. Children are polite, friendly and very proud of their school. Children speak confidently about the school values which are visible throughout the school. All staff interactions are underpinned by the school values and the rights of the child. Almost all children are active members of their school community.
- Most children are motivated and engage well in their learning. Teachers plan regular opportunities for children to work with their peers and take part in group and class discussions. Most children respect their roles and responsibilities when working in pairs and small groups. A few children need adult support to engage well in small groups. Support staff provide sensitive support to ensure all children benefit from working together. In most lessons, teachers plan activities that engage children and maintain their interest. As a result, almost all children behave well in classes. Staff and children have worked together to create a variety of spaces in the playground. The outdoor classroom, willow tunnels, sensory garden and multi-use games area provide an appropriate balance of calm, quiet spaces and places to play. Almost all children behave well in the playground.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. They share the purpose of learning and make helpful links to children's prior learning and skills for learning, life and work. In all lessons, teachers share how children can be successful in their learning. In a few classes, children create the criteria for success. Almost all staff use questioning effectively to consolidate learning and check for understanding. In a majority of lessons, teachers use questioning well to extend children's thinking and develop curiosity. Almost all staff provide helpful verbal and written feedback to help children understand how they can improve. Most teachers ensure the pace of learning provides most children with the right amount of support and challenge. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is too slow. A few children complete simple tasks quickly and would benefit from activities that encourage them to be curious, creative and more independent in their learning. Across the school, children's written work is not of a consistently high standard. Teachers should set higher expectations of what children can do as part of their agreed features of the effective learning and teaching mat.
- Children in P1/2 have regular opportunities to learn through play. This supports well their curiosity and independence. Staff make effective use of the classroom and free-flow access to outdoor space. Teachers ensure they plan opportunities for children to make links across their learning. For example, children add money and make notes in the 'Doggy Daycare' area. Staff demonstrate an awareness of the role of the adult as part of play experiences well. They use observations during play well to plan next steps in learning. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to track children's learning through play-based experiences in a more planned and systemic way.

- All teachers have engaged in accredited professional learning to support their use of digital technology to enhance learning. Digital technology is an integral part of learning and teaching across the curriculum. Teachers are highly-skilled at using a range of digital devices and tools to enrich children's experiences. Across the school, children use a variety of technologies with confidence. They use software applications to create surveys, use robots and programmable toys and use tablets and laptop computers to access websites and collaborate with their peers. Children recently demonstrated their use of assistive technology to representatives from the business world. They have strong digital literacy skills.
- Teachers use an assessment calendar that sets out when and how they should check the progress children are making. They use a range of summative assessments to inform their judgements on children's progress and attainment. They use assessment information well to identify children who may require extra support with their learning. The headteacher should work with teachers to agree a better balance of summative assessments and ongoing assessment approaches. This should help them to gather a wider range of evidence of children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Teachers are at the early stages of using digital pupil portfolios to evidence children's progress across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children use the portfolios to set and evaluate termly learning targets. Teachers should build on this positive approach by supporting children to identify and gather examples of their work that illustrates their progress towards their targets.
- Teachers engage in a range of moderation activities within their learning community and the West Partnership. Teachers created a framework outlining agreed expectations for learning experiences across the learning community. This has strengthened their understanding of the features of effective learning and teaching. Staff should build on this positive approach and include discussion on national Benchmarks as part of their moderation activity. This will support further their understanding of national expectations across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan learning over different timescales. They use a range of three-year curriculum overviews well to support planning for the multi-stage classes. The headteacher has recently introduced a range of local authority progression pathways. Teachers should now engage more fully with the progression pathways to ensure all planned activities build on prior learning and provide appropriate challenge for all children.
- The headteacher meets teachers termly to discuss children's progress. They identify well children who may require support or additional challenge with their learning. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to develop further approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress. Teachers need to engage more fully with national Benchmarks to help them identify gaps for groups of learners. This will support them to use information from tracking meetings to inform their planning and ensure all children make the best possible progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use progression pathways in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They are at the early stages of using local authority progression pathways across all other curricular areas. Staff regularly review the curriculum to check it is relevant and meets the needs of their learners. Their most recent review highlighted the need to adapt the expressive arts curriculum. Teachers have refreshed their approach to teaching music. This is leading to children experiencing progression and depth in almost all areas of their learning.
- The strong focus on skills supports children to make clear links with their learning in school and activities beyond the classroom. They articulate confidently how their communication, problem solving and listening skills help them succeed in class and at clubs and activities in the community.
- Teachers help children to make meaningful links across the curriculum. They do this well linking social subjects, religious and moral education and science. Teachers should build on this positive approach through interdisciplinary learning. This should allow children to apply their skills and knowledge in new contexts.
- Children access their entitlement to a broad general education. Children from P1 to P7 learn French. Children from P4 to P7 learn Spanish as their second language. They learn about a range of religions and beliefs through their religious and moral education curriculum. The headteacher plans opportunities for religious observance through the assembly programme and whole school events. This includes celebrating the Harvest Festival and Christmas. All children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) each week.
- Children experience regular, high-quality outdoor learning. Children have been actively involved in the development of the grounds, which includes a fire pit and sensory garden. Teachers make use of the well-developed school grounds to plan progressive outdoor experiences that develop team building, resilience and problem-solving skills. Children build on their skills as they move through the school. The outdoor environment is an asset to the school and provides a varied and valuable setting for learning. Teachers plan well opportunities to take learning outdoors across the curriculum.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Staff plan a range of events for parents across the school year. They deliver presentations on aspects of the curriculum and events to celebrate the collective successes and achievements of the school community. This has included most recently a workshop on new approaches to writing and the opening of the new sensory garden.
- Teachers share information with parents and carers about learning and progress in a range of ways. They create termly overviews, write annual reports and share termly targets for children who are receiving additional support or challenge with their learning. Almost all parents say they receive helpful and regular feedback about their child's learning and development. Staff and the pupil digital leaders' group are currently developing an online learning profile. This will enhance further approaches to ensuring parents and carers receive regular updates on children's progress, learning and achievements.
- The headteacher uses a school application, monthly newsletters and the school website to share information with parents about the school. This ensures parents know about school events and changes to the school day. A few parents would like a review of the way and amount of information that is shared. The headteacher should continue to monitor and review approaches to communicating with parents.

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

very 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

- The headteacher prioritises the wellbeing needs of everyone in the school community. Staff know children and families very well and respond to their needs with great care and empathy. A culture of wellbeing is embedded across the life and work of school. Almost all children feel safe at school and identify a trusted adult whom they can talk to if they are worried or upset. Almost all parents believe staff know their child very well as an individual.
- Almost all children have a strong understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They talk confidently about how their experiences at school help them to understand and improve their wellbeing. Almost all children make healthy choices at lunch, regularly choosing side salads and fruit. They understand the importance that a balanced diet has on their long-term health and wellbeing. Children value the opportunities they have to contribute to their local community. Their contributions include securing funds for a local sports facility and, participation in events such as 'biscuit and banter' sessions with older residents. Children articulate well how this strengthens their feeling of belonging and their place as included and respected members of the village. Children benefit from high-quality PE and regular opportunities to learn and play outdoors. They confidently articulate how spending time outdoors improves their physical and mental health.
- All children complete an annual wellbeing survey. Staff use well the information gathered to identify children who may require additional support to improve their wellbeing. The extensive range of support available includes art therapy, counselling services and targeted nurture support. Children feel valued, supported and make good progress with their wellbeing through their participation. Children run a wellbeing club at the start of the day. This is open to all children and provides a quiet supported start to the school day. Children articulate well the purpose of the club and the ways in which it helps their peers come into school and get ready to learn.
- Staff have engaged in meaningful professional learning and research to develop their understanding of the range of factors that may impact children's wellbeing, relationships and behaviour. They used this learning to refresh the Better Relationships, Better Learning, Better Behaviour policy. This shared understanding of additional support needs, attachment, trauma informed practice and children's rights, ensures children experience a consistent approach from all staff. Children value the restorative approach used by staff when they experience conflict with their peers. Children are developing well important skills to help them manage their emotions, reflect on their behaviours and interactions and resolve conflict independently. Almost all children recognise how staff support them to understand and respect others.
- A few children continue to require targeted support to help them manage and express their emotions appropriately and to self-regulate when they become upset. Staff create comprehensive Behaviour Additional Support Plans (BASPs) that outline clearly the strategies

in place to de-escalate situations and support children to manage and articulate their feeling and emotions. Staff gather the views of children and parents when creating the BASPs and agree the most appropriate approaches for each child. Strategies include visual timetables to manage transitions, early entry to school and breathing exercises. All staff use the plans well to ensure children experience a consistent approach when they become distressed. As a result, there has been a significant decrease in instances of distressed behaviour across the school. Children who have a BASP in place, spend an increasing amount of time in their class engaging with their learning. This is supporting them to make good progress with their learning.

- The headteacher has a strong understanding of statutory duties relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. She ensures approaches to record keeping and chronologies reflect national guidance. Children who may require a Coordinated Support Plan are considered for this each year. The headteacher effectively coordinates multi-agency support. She is proactive in engaging with other agencies to meet the needs of a few children.
- The headteacher has engaged recently with a national organisation to review approaches to recording, monitoring and reducing instances of bullying behaviour. The school received accreditation for their work in this area. Most children believe the school deals well with bullying behaviour.
- The headteacher has in place highly effective approaches to monitoring and improving children's attendance. She works with parents to identify quickly the factors that impact on attendance. The headteacher works with parents to create an attendance support plan to help families overcome any identified barriers. This includes strong partnership working with other agencies including Woman's Aid, social work colleagues and the school nurse. Almost all children with an attendance support plan now attend school regularly.
- Children experience a well-planned, progressive health and wellbeing curriculum. This is enriched through whole school assemblies that allow children to learn about and discuss the school values, children's rights and the wellbeing indicators.
- Staff track closely the progress of children who may face barriers to their learning. This includes children who receive free school meals and those with additional support needs. Teachers are acutely aware of the challenges children who live in remote rural areas may face. They quickly identify any gaps in children's learning and work with highly-skilled support staff to plan and deliver targeted support. Children benefit from small group and one-to-one support to address gaps and consolidate learning. This includes maths recovery programmes, phonics work and reading practice. Most children with potential barriers to their learning make good progress from prior levels of achievement.
- A few children have in place Additional Support Plans (ASPs). Staff use the plans very well to outline children's strengths and development needs. They create clear, measurable targets that support children to see their progress and successes. Children receive the right support at the right time.
- Children across the school have a clear understanding of inclusion and fairness. They strive to ensure everyone is welcome and feels involved in their life of the school. Staff are beginning to adapt and refresh the curriculum to ensure children develop their understanding of protected characteristics. They have recently explored gender bias within resources and across the curriculum. Staff should continue to work with children to help them develop the skills required to challenge discrimination, prejudice and intolerance.

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 English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children make good progress in their learning. Due to varying numbers at each stage and a fluctuating school roll, there is variability in attainment across each year group. Most children receiving support through the PEF and most children with additional support needs are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment.
- Across the school, most children are on track to achieve national expectations in reading, writing and numeracy. Almost all children are on track to achieve national expectations in listening and talking. A few children are capable of achieving more.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Children across the school are making good progress in literacy.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children talk confidently to adults and to each other. At early level, almost all children take turns and communicate their ideas effectively through play. At first level, almost all children contribute relevant information during group discussions and follow instructions successfully. A few children at first level need support to take turns and listen to the views of others. At second level, almost all children talk confidently about a text, and disagree whilst respecting the views and opinions of others. Most children ask and answer literal and inferential questions in character as part of literacy learning. They are ready to extend their skills to include debating.

Reading

- Across the school, children are enthusiastic and proud of their whole school reading achievements. They enjoy a range of texts including digital and audio texts. Almost all children across P4-7 attend an after-school reading club. At early level, most children answer questions about a story and make predictions about what might happen next. They use their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words with increasing confidence. At first level, most children identify features of fact and fiction texts. They confidently find information using index and contents page. They make simple notes and use these to summarise a text. Children explain their preferences for their favourite authors. They now need to develop their understanding of genres. At second level, a majority of children summarise, predict, clarify and question to support their understanding of texts.

Writing

- At early level, most children form letters correctly and leave spaces between their words. They mark make through play, for example, making appointments at their 'Doggie Day Care'.

Children now need to build their confidence at writing independently to view themselves more as writers. Most children at first and second level use the appropriate structure and style for specific genre, including procedural and explanations. Most children at first level take notes to plan a piece of writing and use a range of interesting vocabulary to engage the reader. A few children are attempting paragraphs to organise their work. At second level, a majority of children are using a range of punctuation, including speech marks to make their writing more interesting. Across the school, children need to develop their skill in creative and imaginative writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Children across the school are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children recall number sequences forwards within the range 0-30 and backwards from 20. They add and subtract mentally to 10. A few children add beyond 10. At first level, most children tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to using analogue and digital clocks. At second level, a majority of children use the comparative size of an object to make reasonable estimations of length. They estimate to the nearest appropriate unit, then measure accurately. They solve simple algebraic equations with one variable. At first and second level, most children are not yet confident in solving problems using a range of strategies.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children use and understand the language of forwards and backwards, solving simple problems using programmable toys. They are not yet confidently using the language of left and right. At first level, most children create symmetrical pictures and designs with more than one line of symmetry. They know that a right angle is 90 degrees. They are not yet using all mathematical language appropriate to the level to describe two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At second level, a majority of children describe two-dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects using specific vocabulary including regular, irregular, diagonal, radius, diameter and circumference. They now need to extend their vocabulary in describing a range of angles identified within shapes in the environment.

Information handling

- At early level, most children use knowledge of colour, shape and size to match and sort items. At first level, most children answer simple questions about graphs. At second level, a majority of children devise ways of collecting data, including using digital technologies. They organise and display data accurately using surveys, frequency tables and bar graphs. Across first and second level, children now need to extend the ways in which they display data more progressively, appropriate to each level.

Attainment over time

- Attainment over time fluctuates due to varying sizes of cohorts and changes in the school roll. Teachers make effective use of Scottish National Standardised Assessment data in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher has used this data to demonstrate progress over time for children in P1, P4 and P7. Overall, children make good progress over time.
- Senior leaders have developed a tracking system to record achievement of a level data. They use this data alongside information relating to a range of barriers children may face to identify gaps in individual children's learning. Teachers and support staff plan and deliver a range of supports targeted at individual needs. Attainment gaps are beginning to narrow significantly as a result of these well-planned interventions. The headteacher should now develop the use of

data to demonstrate more clearly the progress all children make as they move through the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children in P4 to P7 contribute to the life of the school through their participation in pupil leadership groups. Children in P1 to P3 participate in decision making through class discussions and school assemblies. All children recognise the effective contributions they make to their school community.
- Children take a lead role in sharing and celebrating the achievements and successes of themselves and their peers. They create attractive displays of photographs and newspaper cuttings on their 'We are Remarkable Walls'. Older children confidently identify the skills and attributes they develop through participation in activities within and beyond the classroom. Children from P4 to P7 speak enthusiastically about building resilience and confidence through their residential trips. Staff are at the early stages of tracking children's achievements. They are well placed to link this to skills and to identify children at risk of missing out on opportunities to achieve success.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and the community very well. They are aware of the factors that may affect equity in a rural community, including transport to activities and access to experiences in nearby towns. The headteacher ensures an equity of experience through funding transport costs for all children. Staff have created a clear position statement on the cost of the school day. The Parent Council work in partnership with the school to raise funds and secure grants to reduce the cost of the school day for all families.
- The headteacher uses PEF to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Children access a range of interventions tailored to meet their individual needs. As a result, almost all children targeted through PEF are making good progress in their learning. Staff are making good progress in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The role of children in influencing and leading change in their school is a significant strength. The Young Leaders of Learning (YLOL) are responsible for the school improvement priority on skills development. They have created a character, Skills Steve, to help their peers understand the skills they are developing through their experiences at school. The YLOL work with a group from another primary school to extend this work across the learning community. Children are clear about the difference they are making, and why this important to the school and their community.

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.