

Summarised inspection findings

Kirkcaldy North Primary School

Fife Council

19 December 2023

Key contextual information

Kirkcaldy North Primary School is a non-denominational primary school located in the east of Kirkcaldy, in Fife. At the time of inspection, there were 165 children across seven classes on the school roll. The school's senior leadership team comprises of the headteacher and one principal teacher. The headteacher was appointed in September 2023, having held the position in an acting capacity for approximately 18 months.

59% of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones one and two. 37% of children have English as an additional language. A significant number of children have additional support needs.

Kirkcaldy North Primary School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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 and very well-judged strategic leadership for the whole school. She has secured the trust of staff and the wider school community and is very well respected by children, staff, parents and partners. She has established and communicated a clear strategy for continuous school improvement. This strategy is based on a strong understanding of the needs of the whole school community, underpinned by an aspirational vision and high standards. This is a major strength in this aspect of the school's work.
- Following a recent refresh, the vision, values and aims are now embedded throughout the life and the work of the school. Almost all children show a high level of understanding of the school's values and model them well. Most children can talk about how the values underpin positive relationships across the school.
- The headteacher ensures that a wide range of information and evidence is gathered and assessed to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All staff are involved in the school's regular self-evaluation activities. As a result, almost all staff have a shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher gathers parents' views in a range of worthwhile ways. She consults the Parent Council about school improvement priorities and the focus of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) spend. Staff gather and act upon the views of children through questionnaires and focus groups. For example, children's views were instrumental in designing the school library and artwork for the playground. As a result, the headteacher has successfully involved the whole school community in implementing a vision for change and improvement.

- The headteacher carefully plans the pace of change very well to ensure sufficient time to embed improvements. For example, all teachers recently engaged in a range of professional learning to develop high-quality teaching and learning. Working collaboratively, teachers developed a bespoke learning and teaching model which they use consistently in all classes. This is leading to improved approaches to learning and teaching across the school.
- All staff are proud to work at Kirkcaldy North Primary School. Senior leaders, teachers and all staff show high levels of care and attention to children. They model positive relationships with all children, parents, staff and partners very well. All staff work very effectively with each other to improve outcomes for children. Together, they have created a calm, purposeful and inclusive learning environment.
- Senior leaders support all teachers to engage meaningfully with annual staff professional reviews. Teachers link their development plans effectively to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards and the school improvement plan. Teachers and support staff value protected time for professional learning and use this time effectively to develop their practice. For example, support staff have engaged in valuable professional learning relating to trauma-informed practice. Teachers and support staff have visited other schools to learn from good practice in areas such as play and nurture. As a result of the developing culture of empowerment, a few teachers are leading developments in relation to play, nurture and children's rights. The commitment to professional learning and effective leadership of change is resulting in improved outcomes for all children.
- All staff have a deep understanding of the school's social, economic, and cultural context. Staff are aware of the potential barriers to learning children face and gaps in their learning. The headteacher has embedded a range of effective processes to identify and target barriers to learning and track children's progress. As a result, staff meet children's needs effectively and children are making improved progress from prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders and staff work very effectively with a range of partners to support children's wellbeing and progress in learning. Partners feel supported by the headteacher to work collaboratively to support children.
- Senior leaders monitor the work of the school very well. They have established highly-effective quality assurance arrangements to improve learning and teaching. This includes regular class visits and robust tracking and monitoring discussions with teachers. Teachers receive useful feedback from senior leaders during these discussions which they reflect upon to improve their practice. Senior leaders support teachers well to use data to inform their planning to meet children's needs.
- Children across the school enjoy a variety of responsibilities, for example older children are buddies of younger children. Children at every stage have leadership opportunities as members of the pupil council and through recently established ambassador roles. As planned, staff should continue to build on the opportunities children have to develop their leadership roles in the school. In doing so, children should take increased responsibility to evaluate and influence continuous improvement.
- Senior leaders and all staff are committed to working closely with families to support children and improve outcomes. As a result, most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or any issues. Parents are invited into classes to participate in their children's learning on a monthly basis. Children's learning is shared regularly with parents through an online platform.
- The headteacher's rationale for expenditure on PEF is based on a robust analysis of a wide range of data about children's attainment and wellbeing needs. As a result, PEF is being

appropriately targeted to close poverty-related attainment gaps, improve attendance and improve wellbeing.

- The headteacher's involvement in local authority improvement groups is influencing leadership of change beyond the school. For example, the headteacher provides training on child protection and safeguarding to teachers in other schools. She shares her experience of parental engagement through participation in a local authority working group.

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

- Kirkcaldy North Primary School has a very positive, welcoming ethos which is underpinned by the school's vision, values and aims. All members of the school community demonstrate the school's values of compassion, ambition, respect, equity and success. Relationships between staff and children, and among children, are positive. As a result, almost all children are happy at school. Across the school, most children engage well in learning. Children frequently support each other well to improve their learning.
- Most teachers have established well-organised classrooms with attractive wall displays which celebrate children's work and support learning. Teachers use the collegiately designed learning and teaching model (Connect, Aim, Experience, Feedback) well. This is improving the consistency of learning and teaching experiences for children across all stages. All teachers use praise and encouragement well to help motivate children. In most lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear, and children understand the purpose of learning. Most teachers provide differentiated tasks and activities. In most classes, teachers make appropriate use of effective questioning to gauge children's understanding of learning. This is helping children to review and build upon prior learning. Most teachers use feedback effectively to help children reflect on their learning and identify improvements. Teachers should extend the use of feedback to support children to take more responsibility for their learning, including through setting personalised learning targets. In a few classes the pace of teaching could be brisker.
- Most teachers use digital technology effectively to support children's learning. Children have access to computers in class and use these confidently. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to engage children in learning.
- In a few classes, teachers encourage children to identify the skills that they are developing through their learning. This is supporting children to make connections between previous and current learning. As planned, teachers should now embed the language of skills in all lessons.
- Staff work with a range of partners to enrich children's learning experiences effectively. For example, children have benefited from learning activities involving the Dementia Society, the YMCA and local football team. As planned, senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop creative, motivating approaches to learning, including through outdoor learning. This will further support approaches to raise attainment.
- Staff working at the early stages are developing well their understanding of play pedagogy. As a result, children experience a balance of adult-directed, adult-initiated and child-initiated play experiences. Staff should further engage with professional learning using national

practice guidance to develop their approaches. This will help ensure all learning experiences are developmentally appropriate and allow children to develop their learning through play.

- Staff share ideas and good practice regularly with each other. They appreciate the well-considered support they receive from senior leaders. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the whole staff team. Teaching staff and support staff work very well together to ensure they support identified children to make the best possible progress. Support staff have undertaken professional learning which is enabling them to provide targeted support for children.
- Teachers plan over different timescales using local authority and school frameworks to meet the needs of children. This is supporting progressive planning. As planned, teachers should continue to involve children in planning processes, including providing more opportunities for children to identify what and how they would like to learn.
- Senior leaders worked with teachers to develop agreed approaches to assessment. As a result, all teachers assess children's learning throughout the year. They use a wide range of summative and formative assessment information to determine children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. Building on this, teachers should now plan high-quality assessments which allow children to demonstrate application of skills across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders work closely with staff to collate a wide range of data linked to children's attainment and progress. Senior leaders and teachers meet termly to discuss the progress of individual children. They make very effective use of data gathered to identify gaps in children's learning in literacy and numeracy. In doing this, they monitor and support the learning of children facing additional challenges well. This includes, for example, children living with financial hardship, care-experienced children and children with English as an additional language. Senior leaders and teachers adapt successfully the type and level of support where necessary to ensure children make progress from prior levels of attainment.
- All teachers participate in moderation events at school level. For example, teachers have recently been involved in moderation of writing across all stages. This is helping teachers become more confident in making accurate professional judgements linked to children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of national standards through participation in moderation events with other schools.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school is currently in the process of reviewing and refreshing the curriculum rationale. Senior leaders have gathered parents' and staff's views to ensure the refreshed rationale reflects the uniqueness of the school community.
- Teachers make effective use of local authority and school progression pathways to plan learning across all curriculum areas. This is helping children to build on what they already know. Teachers should now ensure children learn about equality and diversity across the curriculum. As planned, senior leaders should continue to work with staff to implement a clear skills progression framework. This will help children to make links between their learning and achievements and skills for learning, life and work.
- Children benefit from class libraries and a well-stocked school library which provide a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Children are proud of their library area. Staff should continue to promote the use of the library to develop a culture of reading for enjoyment and support raised attainment in literacy.
- All children receive their full entitlement of two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) each week.
- Teachers use progressive planners to ensure children experience progression and depth in learning French from P1 to P7. Children in P5 to P7 have recently started learning British Sign Language.
- Teachers work effectively with colleagues at all stages of transition to support children well as they come to school from early years settings or move on to secondary school. They share a range of appropriate information well to help ensure children's continuity of learning, wellbeing and progress. At P1, there is a well-established transition programme in place that is supportive and helpful for families. Children requiring additional support benefit from enhanced engagement programmes with secondary schools to support them as they move from P7 to secondary school. Across the school, teachers share relevant information about children's attainment, wellbeing and individual needs as they move from one stage to the next.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders and staff are highly visible in the playground areas before school. This provides parents with informal opportunities to speak to staff should the need arise. Most parents say that staff are approachable and that they can ask questions, make suggestions or discuss problems as they arise. Almost all parents would recommend the school to other parents.
- Most parents feel that the school organises activities where they can be involved in their child's learning. Parents receive information about what their child is learning in a variety of ways. For example, teachers share termly 'parent prompts' which provide information about their child's learning in key curricular areas. Teachers share examples of children's learning through an online platform. Parents highly value the opportunity to spend time with their child through 'soft start and finish Thursdays'. This is helping parents to support their child's learning at home. Regular updates provided by the headteacher ensure all parents are aware of events and changes within the school.
- The Parent Council works very effectively to lead and support a range of projects and initiatives which are improving outcomes for children and families, for example, the school-based foodbank. This is supporting families with the cost of living and having a measurable impact on improving parental engagement with the life and work of the school.
- Senior leaders involve parents well in the life of the school. They use a range of approaches including online questionnaires to gather parents' views on the work of the school. Parents who have English as an additional language are involved in a highly successful Family Learning Project. Through this project, parents have opportunities to learn English with their children. The project has helped parents to feel welcome to the school and ensure that language is not a barrier to involvement in their child's education.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- The wellbeing of children and their families is central to the work of Kirkcaldy North Primary School. Children benefit from the nurturing and inclusive ethos embedded across the school. Staff have created a culture of positive relationships and high expectations. Children benefit from supportive and respectful adults who know them well. All staff demonstrate a sound understanding of the context of the school community. They use their extensive knowledge of children as individuals to foster caring, respectful relationships. Staff feel they are a valued part of the school community.
- All children who require additional support with their learning benefit from carefully considered support. This includes support from partners such as healthcare professionals, the teacher visual impairment service and speech and language therapists. Children, parents, partners and staff are involved in the development, implementation and review of individual children's plans. They collectively set measurable targets which ensures a consistent approach to supporting children's needs. They review the impact of support and interventions effectively and make necessary adjustments. As a result, children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress in relation to specific targets.
- All teachers complete profiles for children with English as an additional language and set clear, measurable targets for language acquisition. Staff work very well with partners to provide targeted interventions to help children and their families to develop their acquisition of the English language. Children and their families develop their understanding of the English language through the English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) Family Group. This group is also helping children and their families further develop relationships within the school.
- Staff offer high-quality targeted nurture support to a significant number of children. This is improving children's readiness to learn, resilience, engagement, and relationship skills. Staff deliver emotional support programmes for identified children. They have increased children's confidence and provided them with strategies to improve their wellbeing as a result of these programmes. As planned, staff should continue to embed nurturing approaches across the school.
- Senior leaders and staff have begun to discuss the wellbeing indicators through the health and wellbeing curriculum and at regular assemblies. Children are developing their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and now need increased opportunities to reflect on and assess their own wellbeing. This will enable them to express clearly how they feel and discuss if there is a need for support with any aspect of their wellbeing.
- The health and wellbeing curriculum provides children at all stages with progressive learning experiences and consists of a variety of relevant topics. Children's physical wellbeing and fitness is supported by well-planned PE lessons. School staff work in partnership with Active

Schools Scotland to deliver targeted fitness and extra-curricular activities. These have resulted in an increase in children's participation in fitness and sport. Most children agree that they have opportunities to get regular exercise and that the school is teaching them to lead a healthy lifestyle. As planned, staff should now track and monitor children's progress in health and wellbeing.

- Staff fully understand and meet their statutory responsibilities in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. The school's approaches are embedded in legislation and national guidance, such as Getting it Right for Every Child. Staff are confident in meeting their obligations in relation to child protection, safeguarding and meeting the needs of children who require additional support with their learning.
- The headteacher monitors children's attendance at school and has clear processes in place to manage individualised timetables. For a few children, low attendance levels have a negative impact on their progress in learning and attainment. Senior leaders work effectively with different agencies to support families. This is helping to remove barriers to children attending school. As a result, attendance levels are improving.
- Across the school, there is a strong focus on inclusion. This is evident in interactions between staff and children, staff and parents and in peer relationships. The importance of mutual respect is emphasised. Staff recognise and celebrate well the cultural diversity of the school community. As a result, children speak very positively about their ability to recognise and value difference and the importance of equity. Staff collaborate with partner agencies to organise and run sessions for children and parents to learn together. For example, activities such as the Family Fun at the North and the ESOL Family Group promote a culture of inclusion and participation across the whole learning community.
- School staff work very effectively with the Parent Council, who organise and run a successful school based 'KNPS larder'. Through this they provide families with essential supplies which support them with the cost of living. They provide children with books, blankets, backpacks, welcome packs and food. At Christmas, children can access the larder to buy their parents inexpensive gifts. All these initiatives promote an inclusive ethos and provide children with a sense of belonging to Kirkcaldy North Primary School.

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, attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school is satisfactory. At early level, most children, and at first and second level, the majority of children, are achieving national standards in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff provide universal and targeted strategies to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy which are having a positive impact on children's progress in learning. As a result, attainment in literacy and numeracy is beginning to improve. The majority of children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in literacy and English from prior levels of attainment.

Listening and Talking

- At early level, most children are developing their talking and listening skills through purposeful play opportunities. Children who have achieved early level can understand and respond to texts and make simple predictions. At first level, most children take turns during class discussions and when working in pairs and trios. The majority of children at second level, are successfully applying their skills in listening and talking. They can discuss a text and listen to other viewpoints. A few children now need support to take turns and build on the contributions of others during group and class discussions. Across all levels, children would benefit from more opportunities to apply their talking and listening skills in a range of contexts.

Reading

- At early level, most children are developing their knowledge of sounds and letters through play-based pedagogy. Children who have achieved early level can confidently read and discuss familiar and unfamiliar texts. They can hear and say patterns and rhyme and invent their own. Children who have achieved first level read fluently and are able to discuss the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts. Children who are on track to achieve second level, understand literal, inferential, and evaluative questioning. They are at the early stages of identifying techniques authors use to engage readers, for example, word choice and emotive language. Across the school, children would benefit from opportunities to borrow books to read at home from the well-resourced school library. This will support the development of a culture of reading for enjoyment and enhance children's literacy skills.

Writing

- Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to raise attainment in children's writing, particularly at second level. Recently implemented universal and targeted interventions are beginning to improve attainment in writing.
- At early level, most children are exploring writing through play-based opportunities. They now need to further develop pencil control through more planned writing opportunities. At first level, most children use appropriate punctuation in their writing. At second level, the majority of children write reports for a variety of purposes. Children at first and second level need further opportunities to write extended pieces of writing. They should be supported to develop their understanding of the measures of success in writing. This will help them to understand how to improve their writing. Across the school, children should be supported to improve the presentation of written work, including handwriting.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics from their prior levels of attainment.

Number, money and measure

- Children who have achieved early level, order numbers correctly within the range of 0-20. They can name the days of the weeks and the months of the year in sequence. Children need support to identify a range of coins. Children who have achieved first level, can read, write, order and recite numbers up to 1000. They can explain what a fraction is and can compare the size of fractions. They need support to explain the role of the numerator and denominator. The majority of children at second level, can explain the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers. They calculate accurately the perimeter of simple shapes. They need to develop their skills calculating the area and volume of shapes. Across the school, children would benefit from applying number, money and measure skills in a range of real-life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children who have achieved early level, can identify correctly common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They use positional language accurately. Most children who have achieved first level, can name and identify a range of common 2D shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are not yet confident in using mathematical language to describe the properties of shapes and objects. Children who are on track to achieve second level, use mathematical language accurately to describe and classify angles. They are unfamiliar with the diameter and radius within circles.

Information handling

- At early level, children collect data using tally marks for different purposes and display data using pictograms. Children who have achieved first level, can extract information from bar charts. Children on track to achieve second level, can interpret information and draw accurate conclusions from graphs. They should now develop skills in collecting and displaying information, using digital technology, such as using electronic spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

- Prior to the headteacher's appointment, approaches to gather attainment data were not sufficiently reliable. As a result, the school does not have accurate data for attainment over time. The headteacher recently introduced robust and effective processes to assess and monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy. These approaches have supported teachers to become more confident and accurate when making professional judgements about children's attainment and progress. The headteacher now has reliable data for individual and groups of children, including care-experienced children, those who have English as an

additional language and those who experience barriers to learning. Children are now making improved progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and staff should now continue to raise attainment for all children, ensuring gaps in children's literacy and numeracy are targeted to accelerate progress. As planned, senior leaders and staff should develop approaches to track children's progress and attainment across all curricular areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children have opportunities to achieve success in a range of ways, including receiving recognition for demonstrating the school values. Children have opportunities to share their skills and talents with peers through regular 'talent spots' at whole school assemblies. Staff monitor wider achievement opportunities and target activities to ensure children are not at risk of missing out.
- Children across the school have recently been appointed to a number of school leadership groups. These include the pupil council, wellbeing ambassadors, digital ambassadors, 'kitbag' ambassadors, and rights respecting ambassadors. Children are not yet able to discuss the skills they are developing through these roles. As planned, children should now identify and profile the skills for learning, life and work they develop through wider achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a strong awareness of the socio-economic background of children and their families. Senior leaders and staff know children and their families well. As a result, children and families benefit from a range of practical support. This is helping to mitigate against barriers children face to participating in a range of activities.
- Senior leaders use PEF to pay for additional staff to support targeted groups of children who face barriers to learning. As a result of these targeted interventions, children are making good progress against specific targets. Senior leaders and staff should continue to focus on the use of PEF to raise attainment and target gaps in children's literacy and numeracy skills.

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.