

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Ninian's Primary School**

South Lanarkshire Council

21 November 2023

## Key contextual information

St Ninian's Primary School is a denominational school located in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire. The headteacher has been in post since November 2020. She is supported by an acting principal teacher.

St Ninian's Primary School is part of the St John Ogilvie Learning Community. The school roll is 230 children across nine classes. The majority of children attending the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. The school has a high percentage of children eligible for free meal entitlement, when compared to local and national averages.

### 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

- The headteacher and staff ensure all children attending St Ninian's Primary School experience a caring and supportive school ethos and culture. The school's vision and values of providing a nurturing and respectful environment are evident in the mutual positive interactions across the school community. Staff promote positive relationships which helps children's confidence and supports them to engage and interact well during class activities. During lessons, almost all children are attentive and respectful of each other, the teachers and support staff. In the majority of activities, the pace of learning is appropriate for most children. Teachers should now support children to learn independently when undertaking less structured activities.
- All staff make effective use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching presentations and increase children's interest in activities, for example, through explanatory video clips. This enriches children's learning experiences. Across the school all children have access to digital devices. A few teachers use digital technology well to consolidate and enhance children's learning. Most children use matrix bar codes to support learning activities and search engines to develop research skills.
- In almost all classes, teachers share the purpose of the lesson well and make clear links to prior learning. Teachers should continue to develop this effective approach to use language that all children understand when sharing the purpose of learning. In most classes, teachers explain clearly how children can be successful. This approach is raising children's awareness of how they can demonstrate success in their learning.
- When teaching large groups or the whole class, all teachers encourage children to ask and answer questions. All teachers use questions well to check that children understand what is expected from them. A few teachers are highly effective when using questioning techniques to develop children's higher order thinking skills. In these classes, this is extending children's thinking and is stimulating their curiosity. Senior leaders should now share this practice more fully across the school.

- All teachers provide children with helpful oral feedback which is supporting children well in identifying their next steps. Teachers should now ensure all children benefit from increased opportunities to self- and peer-assess their work effectively. Staff should continue to work together to share strong practice in helping children understand the steps needed to move their learning forward.
- Senior leaders have worked well to develop a useful learning and teaching policy which is fostering more consistent approaches to effective teaching across the school. For example, teachers' are improving their approaches to how they share the purpose of learning with children. Senior leaders and teachers are beginning to use the policy to support their professional discussions about the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers should, as planned, continue to use this policy to develop a shared understanding of highly effective teaching.
- Teachers are at the very early stages of developing play, particularly at P1. They are beginning to review the use of spaces in classrooms for children to explore play-based learning. However, younger children would benefit from increased opportunities to learn through well planned, progressive and purposeful play. Teachers should continue to develop and share their understanding and approaches to play, taking account of the national practice guidance. As they do so, they should focus on how effectively they use their learning spaces to create meaningful and motivating play experiences. Senior leaders should allow opportunities for staff to visit highly effective settings to support their learning.
- Senior leaders, supported by teachers, have developed a helpful assessment calendar. This provides teachers with an overview and expectations of the varied summative and standardised assessments used across the school. Overall, teachers are confident in using a range of formative assessment strategies to help learners to reflect on their learning. As a result, almost all teachers gather valid and reliable assessment data and information. This is supporting teachers and senior leaders to correctly identify children who would benefit from targeted interventions. Senior leaders make arrangements to put in place these targeted interventions which is leading to improved outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders support the teachers well to analyse data from a range of assessments and the use of national Benchmarks. They have ensured that all teachers have participated in professional learning on data analysis. This is strengthening teacher's professional judgement and understanding of the progress children make through the levels of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE).
- Teachers recent focus on the moderation of writing is improving their understanding of children's progress with writing. Teachers should now seek opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues from other schools and build on their experience of moderating writing. Senior leaders should plan to extend this practice to include all curricular areas.
- In most classes, children are involved in planning their learning within learning that links different areas of the curriculum. Children identify what they already know about a topic and what they would like to find out which is motivating them in their learning. For example, children are currently focusing on a whole school topic on food waste inspired by COP 26. These experiences led to the 'kids' kitchen' cooking experience, the school swap shop, and the food larder project.
- Across the school, there is a strong ethos of collaboration and positive working relationships amongst teachers. They meet formally and informally to complete plans using the South Lanarkshire progression pathways as reference for all curriculum areas. Teachers' planning uses experiences and outcomes of CfE and national Benchmarks appropriately to inform their

plans for assessment. Teachers plan well for children requiring additional support. They correctly plan for progression in skills using short- and long-term targets.

- Teachers and senior leaders meet termly to track and monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy. These supportive discussions clearly identify children's attainment across these areas. Moving forward, senior leaders have identified rightly, the need to introduce a more robust tracking system across all curricular areas.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

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

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children in P1, P4 and P7 achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and English and in numeracy and mathematics. Across other stages most children are on track to achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. A few children would benefit from further challenge in their learning. Almost all children who require additional support are making good progress from prior levels of learning.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- Children who have achieved early level enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and talk about their choices of their favourite texts. At first level, most children talk confidently during class and group discussions. At both early and first level, children should now focus on listening more to others and taking turns. At second level, almost all children are successfully developing and applying their skills in listening and talking across all areas of the curriculum. The majority of children speak confidently and articulately and are able to express their opinions effectively. They listen and respond well to others in group and class discussions.

### Reading

- Staff have developed a school library which provides access to a range of reading materials, including fiction and non-fiction books. Across the school, children have regular opportunities for personal reading. Staff should develop the use of the library further to develop a love of reading across the school.
- Most children who recently achieved early level recognise sounds and simple blends. They effectively use this knowledge to read new texts. Most children who have achieved first level talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and can identify key features of different genres. Most children read aloud fluently and are developing their expression. They understand a text as they read and use strategies when encountering unfamiliar words. Children working towards second level use key reading skills such as predicting, inferring and summarising well. They identify which sources are reliable and unreliable when researching. They would benefit from further practice identifying and discussing writer's style and other features appropriate to genre.

### Writing

- Writing has been a recent whole school priority area for improvement. Children's progress in writing is showing improvement across all stages as a result. Most children who have

achieved early level demonstrate strong early writing skills. They can identify the key features that makes a sentence and confidently use this in personal writing. Children who have achieved first level confidently use strategies, such as phonic knowledge and dictionaries, to support them as they spell unfamiliar words. A few children would benefit from revisiting the use of punctuation to support them as they write independently. Children working towards second level are aware of writing for a variety of purposes and can talk about the key features of different styles of writing.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

### **Number, money and measure**

- Almost all children at early level recognise a range of numbers. Most children add and subtract within 10 with confidence. At first level, most children have a good understanding of place value to hundreds, tens and units and are confident in using concrete materials to support their answers. Children who have achieved first level demonstrate well their understanding of the importance of time and how it impacts on life, learning and work. The majority of children working towards second level have strong mental maths skills. They make connections between the importance of understanding decimals and can relate it to working with money. However, they find multiplying and dividing decimals challenging. Across the school, children should have further opportunities to explain the methods and strategies they use when working on mathematical calculations.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Across early and first levels, almost all children have a good understanding of shape. At early level, children can name at least four two-dimensional shapes and can identify a range of shapes within their environment. As they move forward through the school, children can describe properties of various shapes and by second level they can discuss properties of three-dimensional objects.

### **Information handling**

- Children at early level use tally marks to make picture graphs. As they progress through first level, they extended their learning in this area well by producing bar graphs and interrogating the data. Across the school, most children understand types of graphs and how to interpret data as appropriate to their stage. Children at second level are confident in analysing and interpreting data from pie charts and timetables.

### **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders rigorously gather attainment data for all year groups with teachers annually. In both literacy and numeracy, data demonstrates a significant reduction in attainment during the Covid-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, attainment has returned and, in some instances, increased beyond pre pandemic levels.
- In recent years, senior leaders have carefully analysed all attainment data to identify specific gaps in learning for individual children and cohorts. Targeted interventions are having a positive impact on reducing the attainment gap in both literacy and numeracy and is raising attainment overall.
- Senior leaders are developing a new approach to capturing the range of information they gather on children's attainment. Once completed, this helpful tool should be used to interrogate further different trends within cohorts of children such as those who are care experienced or have English as an additional language. Senior leaders should look to extend their tracking of attainment to include all other curriculum areas.



## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Almost all children across the school benefit from a range of activities that develop their skills, promote success and increase participation in healthy activities. Children are proud of their achievements linked to their successes and appreciate the opportunity to share these with the school community. Children speak positively of how staff help them recognise and celebrate their successes in school and out with school. Children's access to school clubs has resulted in a significant increase in children's participation in sports, over the past two years. Partnerships developed by senior leaders have resulted in girl's participation in sports increasing significantly, with almost all girls now accessing physical and sporting activities. As a result of participation in sports, children across the school are developing well their teamwork skills, resilience and confidence.
- Children enjoy the range of activities provided by the school to develop independence, leadership and global citizenship. Children welcome and engage in opportunities to become junior road safety officers, undertake charitable work or volunteer in a local café. P7s develop skills of leadership, independence and resilience, teamwork and communication through the annual outdoor programme. House captains and vice house captains feel that their leadership role increases their confidence and how they uphold the shared values of the school. They accurately describe ways they make a positive difference to the school community. Children across the school engage with house captains and vice captains to discuss and action improvements to school life. Almost all children take great pride in their contributions to the school which include meetings with senior leaders to discuss what would help those in their community.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue with their plans to track and monitor children's progress in developing skills and participation in activities within and beyond school. This will support staff identify children who are at risk of missing out and provide support to increase their opportunities to succeed and achieve.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have highly effective approaches in place to identify and support individual children and small groups who require support to increase their attainment. They work with staff to identify children who would benefit from early intervention. This is leading to increased attainment, reduction in barriers to learning, supportive transitions and narrowing of the poverty related attainment gap.
- This is the first year senior leaders have developed a clear strategy for the use of PEF. They use the majority of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) on a full-time class teacher to provide targeted interventions for reading and writing. Interventions are targeted accurately at reducing the poverty related attainment gap. Using PEF, senior leaders have developed an early intervention oral language programme for targeted children in P1. To support this intervention, senior leaders sourced support assistants to support its delivery. Early data and information shows that these children are having initial success in accelerating aspects of language acquisition. Additionally, children receiving targeted support for their reading and numeracy skills are improving in line with their language acquisition.



## Other relevant evidence

- Overall, parents feel involved in all aspects of school life. They have an awareness of how senior leaders use PEF to reduce the cost of the school day and use additional staffing to provide support to children across the school week. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to consult with parents on how the school uses PEF moving forward.

## 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.