

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Andrew's Primary School**

East Ayrshire Council

29 August 2023

## Key contextual information

St Andrew's Primary School and Early Childhood Centre (ECC) forms part of the St Joseph's Campus in East Ayrshire Council. Children attend the school from across Kilmarnock and Hurlford.

Over the last few years, the school has experienced significant changes in staffing and high levels of staff and child absence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors.

At the time of the inspection the school roll was 351 children working across 13 classes. This session, the school has received £93,000 of Pupil Equity Funding. Twenty-two percent of children have additional support needs. Thirty-four percent of children live in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one and two.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**weak**

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

- Over the last few years, St Andrew's Primary School has undergone a period of significant instability and change due to a range of factors. This, combined with the impact of COVID-19, has negatively influenced the school's capacity for continuous improvement and the pace of change. Priorities have started then stopped, or they have not been implemented fully and evaluated. Therefore, there is now a need to manage the pace and direction of change more effectively. School improvement priorities need to be based on robust self-evaluation involving children, staff and parents. Staff should work together to develop and embed rigorous approaches to self-evaluation. This will ensure they involve the whole school community in identifying key priorities.
- There is a welcoming ethos and culture within St Andrew's Primary School. In session 2021/22 the school identified the need to refresh their vision, values and aims to reflect the unique school context. An evaluation of these was undertaken in consultation with children, staff and parents. The new vision, values and aims reflect the school's Catholic ethos of valuing each member of the school community and the school motto of Faith, Truth and Hope.
- The new school values have been adapted into the child friendly language of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Staff display these values clearly in classrooms and corridors, and they discuss them with children in assemblies. Staff should continue to embed the use of the school vision, values and aims. In doing this they should, as planned, share them further with the wider school community and parents.
- The annual school improvement plan outlines priorities for the year ahead taking account of local authority priorities. The current school improvement plan has too many priorities. Improvement priorities need to focus more clearly on improving outcomes for children. All staff should work together to revise and streamline the school improvement plan. They should

consider how sustainable planned priorities will be with the resources available. This will ensure that there is time for staff to implement planned actions fully. Staff should work together to evaluate at regular periods the progress they are making in relation to planned priorities.

- Staff are reflective about their practice and discuss regularly with each other ways to develop their skills and knowledge. The school recognises the need to increase the opportunities staff have to undertake leadership roles to improve leadership at all levels. Staff have received helpful professional learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff describe that this professional learning has helped them to engage children and support their learning more effectively. All staff now need to have more formal opportunities to collaborate and share practice with each other and colleagues from other schools. The school should ensure that staff have the opportunity to review their professional development each session. The school should work with staff to create an internal collegiate professional learning calendar aligned to school, local and national priorities.
- A quality assurance calendar is in place to help staff gather information about the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, teachers worked together to evaluate how well learning environments support children's health and wellbeing. They also quality assured approaches to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This work has supported them well in identifying improvement next steps in these specific areas. Building on this, staff should now ensure that quality assurance processes take place regularly. This will provide all staff with a more accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- A few children have opportunities to lead on and influence aspects of school life. For example, the pupil council recently decided on the focus for themed fundraising afternoons. The Junior Road Safety Officers have created plans to improve the arrangements for dropping off and picking up in the school car park. They are keen now to implement their plans. P7 children enjoy leading younger children in games in their role as playground leaders. Children would welcome more opportunities to shape and influence the work of the school. They should now have more leadership roles and opportunities to participate in school improvement planning.
- Partnership working with St Joseph's Academy is leading to positive outcomes. A well-planned transition programme is supporting older children effectively in their continuity of learning. Staff should now work together to improve transition planning for children entering P1. The school should build closer links with the ECC to improve transitions and the continuity of learning for children at early level.

### 3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the school, there are positive relationships between adults and children. Children are polite, articulate, and keen to engage with visitors. The school values of 'ready, respectful, safe' are visible on displays throughout the school. All staff should continue to develop their use of the school values with children. This will support a shared understanding of their relevance to the school community.
- The quality of learning and teaching in most classes is having a positive impact on learners. In these classes, teachers provide lessons that are well-structured and engage children well in their learning. Children are confident and articulate when contributing to class discussions and cooperate well with each other in pairs and groups during tasks. A few children are passive during learning experiences and become disengaged. Teachers should plan experiences which take better account children's interests and needs. This will support all children's engagement and enable them to take increasing responsibility for leading their own learning. All teachers share the purpose of lessons to support children to understand how they can be successful in their learning. In a minority of lessons, children co-create their own steps to success. Teachers would benefit from further opportunities to share effective practice with each other. This will help to ensure consistency of learners' experiences.
- Teachers use digital technology to support children's learning. For example, children use interactive whiteboards to enhance their learning tasks or use tablets to play games which reinforces their learning. Teachers should make more effective use of digital technology to enhance children's learning and to help children who require additional support for their learning. They should review their digital literacy skills progression planning from P1 to P7 to ensure children build on the digital skills they already have.
- Staff participated in useful professional learning to improve their practice in supporting children's wellbeing. All staff should review professional learning about restorative and nurturing approaches on an ongoing basis. This will ensure consistent approaches and a more inclusive learning environment across the school community. Classroom assistants are timetabled to provide appropriate support for individual children and small groups. They are keen to support children well and would welcome further training to ensure that they are fully skilled in meeting the needs of all children.
- The school is at the early stages of considering the development of play. Staff should engage with nursery colleagues, research, and local and national practice guidance. This will help staff to develop a shared understanding of learning through play and the role of the adult in supporting interactions and children's experiences. They should reflect on the use of the space available to provide learning in a stimulating environment that enhances children's engagement, curiosity, and independence.

- Teachers use oral feedback to support children in their learning. All teachers should work together to develop more consistent approaches to the use of formative assessment strategies. This will support children to make the best possible progress. Most teachers use questioning and plenary sessions effectively to check children's understanding. Moving forward, teachers should expand their use of high-quality summative and holistic assessment. This will provide learners with more opportunities to demonstrate breadth, depth, and application of learning across the curriculum.
- Prior to the pandemic, teachers moderated standards of attainment. They recognise rightly the importance of re-engaging with the learning, teaching, assessment and moderation cycle more fully to ensure a shared understanding of expected standards. Teachers are gaining confidence in making professional judgements about children's attainment during moderation activities with St Joseph's Academy. Teachers should have opportunities to engage further in moderation activities. This will improve further teachers' professional judgements about learners' progress towards achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Teachers track children's progress in learning in literacy and numeracy using the National Benchmarks. They take account of the main factors that might be barriers to learning. As teachers develop more consistent assessment approaches, they will be able to evaluate children's success in learning more robustly.
- Staff share information about children's attainment during tracking meetings which take place three times a year. These discussions should now have a greater focus on individual children's progress, strengths and needs. Staff need to agree and record the specific actions they will take to support children to overcome barriers to learning and engagement. They should make better use of data across all curricular areas to inform planning and adapt learning to meet the needs of all children. This will ensure all children achieve as highly as possible.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use local authority progression pathways to plan learning in all curricular areas. These pathways take account of CfE experiences and outcomes and the National Benchmarks. In addition, teachers use a school numeracy pathway which is supporting them to provide progression of learning in this area.
- Children have opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, however this is not yet planned consistently. Teachers should review how they plan learning which links different areas of the curriculum. Teachers should revisit CfE guidance to plan relevant contexts for learning which support children to apply their skills and knowledge and ensure depth of learning. In doing so, they should seek the views of children to consider contexts for learning that motivate children and build on their interests.
- Children receive their entitlement to religious education each week. Children across the school are learning French as their second language and children in P5 to P7 learn Spanish. Teachers have clear progression pathways to support the planning and delivery of modern language learning. They should ensure that languages are taught consistently across all stages. Staff should now review the balance of the entire curriculum offer to ensure children experience more focused learning in all curricular areas. Timetabling should ensure all children receive their full entitlement of two hours of quality physical education each week.
- Class teachers have developed library spaces in classrooms to allow children to choose books for their own enjoyment. Children also have access to the campus library. Children have access to large school grounds and community facilities. Before COVID-19, children had useful opportunities to participate in outdoor learning awards. As planned, staff should now develop a progressive programme for outdoor learning. This will enhance children's knowledge of the local area and enable them to apply their skills in different contexts.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- St Andrew's Primary school works with a number of partners to improve outcomes for children. This includes very positive partnerships with the associated St Joseph's and St Matthew's Parishes which is supporting children's spiritual development well. All partners feel that the school values their contribution and they describe the welcoming ethos.
- Most parents feel that staff know their child as an individual. Most feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. A minority of parents would like more information about how their child is assessed, the progress their child is making and how to support their child's learning at home. Staff should continue to seek opportunities to involve parents in their child's learning. They identify that reviewing approaches to homework will be a starting point for this work.
- The school communicates with parents in a number of helpful ways. This includes the school website, school app and newsletters. A recently introduced a class weekly newsletter is supporting communication. Parents speak positively about this initiative and welcome the weekly information update.
- St Andrew's Primary School has an active Parent Council which is keen to engage more parents in supporting the life and work of the school. The Parent Council is consulted about school improvement priorities. The Parent Council and worked successfully in partnership with the school to agree the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This resulted in the creation of a nurture room to support children's wellbeing.

## 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

weak

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

- Most children feel that they can speak to adults in school about their worries or concerns. They are aware of the school values of 'ready, respectful and safe'. Whilst staff refer to these core values within a few lessons, these are not consistently translated into actions in class and in the playground. Whilst the majority of children feel that their peers treat them fairly and with respect, there is a need to embed the values more fully into the daily life of the school. This will support all children to build and maintain positive relationships.
- Staff use a range of strategies to help promote positive relationships across the school. They use restorative conversations to help children to resolve disagreements. All staff are not yet using these consistently. Some of the language and methods used to manage behaviour across the whole school need to be more aligned to the restorative principles. This will increase the impact that restorative approaches have on helping children to develop positive relationships.
- The school has achieved the first stage of accreditation for their work on children's rights. All classes have a class charter and a few of these make specific reference to the United Nations Convention of the Rights on the Child (UNCRC). Children have an awareness of a few of the articles. As planned, the school should re-establish the UNCRC steering group to provide children with more opportunities to learn about the UNCRC in meaningful and relevant contexts.
- Staff participated in professional learning on using nurturing approaches. They also created an attractive and well-resourced nurture room to support individuals and groups of children with identified needs. Children are not using this resource as planned due to changes to staff remits. There is now a need to review current arrangements to ensure that children who would benefit from nurture input are able to access this valuable support.
- Classroom assistants provide children with sensitive and helpful assistance in class but are often deployed to provide responsive support outwith the classroom. This has an impact on the support they provide with learning and teaching across the school on a daily basis.
- There is a need to ensure those children who are in school but attend class on a part-time basis receive their full entitlement to education. There is an important need to improve the planning, recording and monitoring of changes to children's timetables.
- Almost a quarter of children and a minority of staff are concerned about standards of behaviour within the school. Almost a third of parents and a minority of staff do not believe that the school deals effectively with bullying. This is having a negative impact on relationships across the school. The school is in the early stages of implementing the local authority's relationships

policy. In taking this forward, it will be of benefit to gather the views of all stakeholders about the policy. This will ensure that the policy reflects the views of all and that there is a clear and shared understanding across the school community. As part of this work, it will be important to develop a cohesive whole school approach to promoting positive relationships.

- Several universal initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of children have been introduced. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used to facilitate the introduction of a whole school approach to helping children to understand and regulate their emotions. Staff use a shared language and useful visual prompts when discussing emotional wellbeing with children. They support children to identify steps that they can take to regulate their emotions. As a result of this work, children are more aware of their feelings. They are becoming increasingly skilled at discussing their emotions and can identify common catalysts and responses. Staff completed an audit of classroom environments and introduced calm areas and visual timetables to support children's emotional wellbeing. This is helping to make classrooms more inclusive. As a next step, staff should now evaluate the extent to which all new approaches are improving wellbeing outcomes for identified groups of children. This will help them evidence the impact on attainment and achievement, identify what is making the biggest difference to children and inform this work further.
- All children complete a self-evaluation of their wellbeing three times per year. Teachers have follow-up discussions with individuals and groups to address any concerns children raise. There is a need to develop further children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators to help make this process more meaningful for them. It would be useful to cohesively gather and use this data to track and monitor overall wellbeing trends and progress. This will help the school to plan appropriate interventions to support children.
- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to compliance with the Nutritional Regulations and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 (the Act). Health and Nutrition Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the catering provider.
- Staff work with partner agencies to help children who require support for their learning or wellbeing. They complete 'Child's Plans' and 'Individual Learning Plans' and agree on long- and short-term learning targets for children. Staff review these targets termly. There is a need to increase the involvement of children, families and support for learning staff in determining targets and assessing children's progress. Staff need to ensure that individual children's targets are appropriate and include clear measures of success. This will enable them to evidence clearly children's progress in relation to their individual targets and ensure interventions lead to improved outcomes for children.
- Children who require additional support with literacy and numeracy benefit from targeted support in small groups. The majority are making good progress towards their individual targets, and a few are making very good progress. However, a number of children are missing regular support for their learning due to absence. A more cohesive, robust and consistent approach to recording, tracking and monitoring the attainment of children with additional support needs should be developed. This will help staff to have a clear overview of children's progress and the support children need to achieve their potential.
- There is a need to review the current approach to monitoring and improving children's attendance. The school must confirm the reason for absence as quickly as possible. Children's

attendance should be tracked carefully and a robust approach to reducing instances of absence developed. This will support children to achieve the best possible outcomes.

- Overall, there is a need to review the school's approaches related to wellbeing and inclusion. This should include processes related to meeting children's additional support needs. Local authority guidance, legislation and national guidance will support staff in this important aspect of their work.
- Most children are positive about the opportunities they have to learn about a healthy lifestyle and the benefits of regular exercise. The school has developed effective links with Active Schools and children have a few opportunities to attend sports clubs. Staff should support children to learn about all aspects of health and wellbeing, including issues such as diversity, inclusion and discrimination.

## 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

- The school submitted attainment figures based on teachers' professional judgement. Whilst teachers are developing a better shared understanding of standards, the data submitted by the school is not yet fully accurate. Staff need to develop further their use of assessment to support overall judgements of children's progress. The inspection team identified that overall, the majority of children are achieving expected levels in numeracy and mathematics and in literacy and English. A minority of children are capable of even greater progress.
- The majority of children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress towards their targets, with a few making very good progress.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress across all areas of literacy and English. A few children make good progress in reading and writing.

### Listening and talking

- Most children listen well to instructions and explanations from their teacher. They are confident to share thoughts and ideas. Across the school, a few children require support to listen carefully and remain engaged, particularly in whole-class situations. Teachers need to ensure children across the school develop talking and listening skills progressively in line with CfE experiences and outcomes. This will help children to have discussions in pairs and groups, responding to, and building, on the ideas of others in an age-appropriate way.

### Reading

- All children have access to a class library and staff encourage them to explore texts for enjoyment. Children who are on track to achieve early level recognise initial sounds, simple blends and read common words with increasing confidence. They can answer questions about stories and make predictions about what might happen next. At first and second level, children talk enthusiastically about favourite authors and genres. They enjoy whole-class novels and respond well to follow up activities which develop their comprehension skills. Children should have opportunities to engage with a wider range of texts. A minority of children are capable of engaging with more challenging texts.

### Writing

- Children at early level learn form letters correctly and explore the purposes of writing through their free play. They copy sentence stems to help them create texts. A few children are ready to write independently without this scaffolding and should have increased opportunities to do so. At first and second level, children develop their writing skills, punctuation and grammar progressively. They explore the features of different types of texts, for example, newspaper reports and letters. Children have opportunities to write across the curriculum. Staff should

ensure that children apply the same standards of written work in these pieces. Children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write extended texts for a range of audiences and purposes.

### **Attainment in numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

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

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, confidently count on and back from 20, identifying missing numbers in a line. Children know the days of the week and can order of the months of the year linking them to seasons. They require more practice in using an analogue clock to tell the time to o'clock. Children who are on track to achieve first level, read, write and order accurately whole numbers up to 1,000. They need more practice in using their knowledge of times tables to multiply and divide mentally. They use measuring jugs accurately to measure water to a litre and half litre. Children who are on track to achieve second level, enjoy working with simple algebraic equations. They can explain the purpose of and difference between debit cards and credit cards. They need more practice in estimating and measuring accurately using units of weight.

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

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, confidently identify familiar two-dimensional shapes within everyday objects. Children who are on track to achieve first level, identify and describe the properties accurately of a range of three-dimensional shapes. They are less confident in identifying right angles. Children who are on track to achieve second level, use their knowledge of compass points to give and follow directions. They need further practice in classifying angles accurately.

### **Information handling**

- Children who are on track to achieve early level, use information gathered to create a pictograph. Children who are on track to achieve first level, use tally marks to gather and sort data for a given purpose. Children who are on track to achieve second level, choose the most suitable scale to display information on a graph. They need more experiences in creating an extended range of graphs, charts and diagrams using digital technology.

### **Attainment over time**

- Staff are part of a local authority pilot of a new three-point tracking and monitoring tool, recording children's progress for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Data currently available is not yet robust and does not always reflect accurately children's progress. Staff should continue to develop approaches to gathering data on children's progress, which reliably illustrate how well children attain over time.
- Staff discuss children's progress focusing on children who are not on track or who are exceeding expectations during tracking meetings. As a result, they identify interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. An overview of the progress individual children and cohorts make, as a result of targeted support and challenge, should be maintained. This will give staff a clearer indication of the specific interventions which are having a positive impact on closing gaps in attainment over time.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children's achievements, both in and out of school, are recognised, celebrated and shared with the school community at assemblies and on the school's social media platform. Children in P6 and P7 participate successfully in the Pope Francis Faith Award. A significant number of children from across the school have their artwork on display as part of an exhibition in the

Dick Institute and Library Museum in Kilmarnock. They are rightly proud to see their creations valued, showcased and shared with the local community in this way.

- Children involved with pupil groups such as the pupil council or the playground leaders, have opportunities to develop leadership and other skills. Staff recognise the need to ensure all children have more opportunities to develop a range of skills including leadership. Children also have opportunities to attend a range of clubs, including dance and art clubs. There is a plan to use the recently introduced achievement tracker to identify children who may be at risk of missing out. Children would benefit from support to understand the range of skills for learning, life and work that they are developing through their achievements and participation.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff are aware of the socio-economic context of their school community. PEF funding is used to enhance staffing and develop whole-school approaches to nurture, wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Planned approaches, interventions and strategies are having a positive impact on children's overall progress in literacy and numeracy. Where applied, nurturing principles and new approaches to wellbeing are supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing. Staff identify poor attendance as a key factor in their attainment gap. They should continue their efforts to address pupil attendance concerns, working closely with families and the home-school link worker. Staff recognise need to evaluate more closely the impact of all planned interventions on attainment. This will help them to understand how well they are closing the attainment gap caused by children's socio-economic circumstances.
- Staff are mindful of the need to minimise the cost of the school day to ensure all children have equity of experience. They work closely with the Parent Council who have instigated support for families through a uniform and communion dress 'swap shop'. Staff and partners offer clubs and activities free of charge and financial support is available for trips and residential experiences as required.

## 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.