Summarised inspection findings

Kelloholm Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

18 June 2024

Key contextual information

Kelloholm Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the small village of Kelloholm in Dumfries and Galloway. The headteacher has been in post since August 2023 and is supported by a principal teacher. The headteacher's appointment followed a period of significant change in the senior leadership of the school. The school roll is 160 children. There are seven classes, including five composite classes. Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. Children's attendance at the school is generally below the national average. Exclusions have reduced from a few instances to none in the most recent session. In September 2022, the school reported that 32% of children had additional support needs.

Kelloholm 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	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	

■ The headteacher has focused appropriately on building positive relationships with stakeholders across the school community. She is offering increased stability after significant changes in the leadership of the school. This period of change has impacted on the progress staff have made with school improvements. The headteacher, following a period of getting to know the school context, recognises the need to significantly increase the pace of change. This will support improved outcomes for children.

■ Senior leaders and staff reviewed the vision, values and aims in August 2023. However, they did not consult with wider stakeholders, such as children and parents. The current vision, values and aims do not have a high profile. They do not provide the school community with a unifying sense of purpose and direction. The headteacher identifies the need to strengthen the themes of aspiration and community. Senior leaders should continue with plans to review the vision, values and aims to ensure they reflect better the current school context.

■ Staff have a strong understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school. They recognise the importance of providing children with a range of experiences which develop their skills, confidence and sense of belonging. Senior leaders have developed successful partnerships with community groups and a wide range of partners. These partners offer children well-considered experiences that support their wellbeing and sense of achievement.

■ There is a significant need to improve strategic leadership of improvement at all levels. The current approach to school improvement planning is not robust. Senior leaders and staff must ensure that priorities in the school improvement plan are evidence-based, relevant and measurable. Staff are not yet able to demonstrate clearly which strategies are leading to

improved outcomes for children. Senior leaders and staff should develop their approaches to evidencing the impact of improvements and use this to inform their next steps. There is considerable scope to extend the role of parents, children and partners in the planning and evaluation of improvement priorities.

- Senior leaders should develop an outline which details their roles, remits and responsibilities and how staff contribute to key aspects of the work of the school. This will support senior leaders to balance better time spent on operational activities with clear and effective strategic leadership and direction.

- The headteacher has introduced a clear quality assurance calendar. The calendar details self-evaluation activities to be undertaken such as attainment reviews, conducting lesson observations and the moderation of children's work. The next step is to ensure all activities are conducted routinely across the school. Senior leaders should ensure evidence of robust self-evaluation is systematically gathered and reviewed to evaluate progress and inform their next steps in whole-school improvements. Staff are at the early stages of using How good is our school? 4th edition to support their self-evaluation.

- A majority of teachers contribute to the development of aspects of the school's work, for example improving the use of digital technology and play pedagogy. All staff should extend their involvement in the process of change and ensure they prioritise the areas most needed by the school. Staff participate in appropriate professional learning opportunities, provided by the school, local authority and national organisations. They use collaborative time well to share their learning and knowledge with colleagues.

- Staff now need to look outwards to learn from effective practice adopted by schools in and beyond their local authority. They should seek to work with other schools to create collaborative networks in order to share and explore practice and pedagogy further. There is scope for teachers to use practitioner enquiry and research to support their approaches to continuous improvement. Staff must continue to work together to improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. This will help drive raised attainment and ensure all children achieve their potential.

- Senior leaders support all teachers to engage meaningfully with annual professional reviews. Teachers use this process to talk about aspects of the work of the school which interest them and to consider professional learning opportunities for the upcoming year. Senior leaders should ensure all teachers link their development plans to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards and directly to areas of school improvement. They should also use professional reviews to consider how they are continuously developing their leadership capacities over time.

- School learning assistants (SLAs) lead targeted interventions to support the development of children's literacy and numeracy skills. They undertake meaningful professional learning which allows them to play an important role in supporting identified children to progress in their learning.

- Children offer their ideas eagerly to support their school to improve, through pupil surveys and groups. Staff should provide children with further training and support to help them to offer more valuable feedback about their school experiences. Senior leaders should extend the use of 'you said, we did' displays to help children understand how their views influence change. A minority of children have leadership opportunities across school life. For example, almost half of children in P7 serve as house captains or prefects, and act as positive role models for their younger peers. Senior leaders and staff should explore and increase opportunities for more children to be meaningfully involved in leadership roles.

2.3 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

■ Children enjoy kind and caring relationships with staff. Interactions between staff and children are positive and supportive. Children are polite, well-mannered and enthusiastic. Most children listen and engage well with the tasks set by their teacher. They are eager to learn and are willing participants in the wider life of school.

■ A majority of children benefit from the increasing range of contexts used for learning. In most lessons, children value opportunities to use digital technology to stimulate their learning. They engage well when using online tools, applications and games to reinforce their learning effectively. Most children, including those at the youngest stages, use digital technology with confidence. They apply search engines for research purposes and use devices to record or present their learning in a variety of ways.

■ Children benefit from extensive outdoor areas which provide a rich environment for learning. Teachers are increasing their use of outdoor learning across the school. They should now extend children's opportunities for outdoor learning to ensure they provide rich opportunities to develop children's creativity, curiosity and independence.

■ In most lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. A majority of teachers use questioning techniques well to prompt children to think deeply about their learning. This practice should be developed further across the school. Most children enjoy working with their peers to discuss their learning. Teachers use modelled responses for writing tasks successfully to help children to identify the features of a good piece of work. Children recognise this helps them to understand what is expected of them and how they can demonstrate their skills and abilities through their work.

■ A majority of teachers share the purpose of learning routinely and in a minority of lessons these are linked appropriately to measures of success. In a few lessons, children work with their teacher to help to identify what success in learning will look like. This practice should be shared across the school and developed further. This will help to increase children's understanding of how to be successful in their learning.

■ Children's motivation for learning improves in a few lessons that move briskly between teacher-led discussion, independent tasks, and paired or group work. Teachers should ensure all learning time is used to support purposeful learning. A majority of teachers rely too heavily on learning activities such as completing worksheets, overly repeated tasks or copying text. These activities do not provide an appropriate level of challenge for all learners or support children's engagement in learning well. At times, this leads to a few children engaging in low-level disruptive behaviours, such as talking over their teacher and distracting their peers. Children would benefit from more opportunities to exercise personalisation and choice, and to lead

aspects of their learning. This will further children's enthusiasm for learning. Most teachers should have higher expectations of children, to ensure all children achieve to their full potential.

■ Children requiring additional support with their learning receive appropriate help to progress with their learning. Teachers increasingly use digital technology to offer discrete and well-considered support and differentiated materials. A few children need further support to ensure they are fully included in their learning. Senior leaders and teachers need to continue to review these approaches to ensure they plan learning which is inclusive of all children's needs.

■ Teachers are developing valuable opportunities for children in P1 to learn through play, including block play, based on research and professional learning. Teachers have worked with staff in the nursery to create inviting and well-resourced areas for play which children access confidently. Teachers record helpful observations of play-based learning and provide activities designed to consolidate or extend specific aspects of learning in literacy and numeracy. As planned, staff should continue to develop their approaches to play pedagogies further across the school, through adult-led and child-initiated learning, based on national guidance.

■ Children receive helpful feedback in most classes. Teachers are developing appropriately children's skills in using self and peer-assessment. In a few classes, children discuss confidently their learning targets or goals. Most teachers now need to ensure they talk to children regularly about their targets. This will help children to evaluate their progress better and will help them to make informed decisions about their next steps.

■ Teachers plan learning appropriately using progression pathways across most curricular areas. These plans provide an overview of the expected outcomes for children's learning. Staff should continue to review their approaches to planning, ensuring assessment is an integral aspect of the planning process. This will help teachers to develop a more consistent approach to planning learning which better meets the needs of all learners and helps teachers to provide increased pace and challenge in their teaching.

■ Teachers use of a range of formative and summative assessments, including standardised assessments, to measure attainment in literacy and numeracy. Teachers should continue to develop their use of consistent approaches to high-quality, ongoing assessment that is planned as part of learning. This will help them to adapt their teaching to ensure all children can build on their learning.

■ Teachers have engaged in school and cluster moderation activities focused on a few curricular areas. This has supported their ability to provide accurate teacher judgements. Teachers should build on this progress by scheduling regular moderation activities with other schools across the local area and beyond. This will extend their understanding of national standards.

■ Senior leaders and staff use the newly developed school tracking system well to record individual children's progress. As planned, senior leaders and staff should extend their use of the tracking system to identify any trends and patterns in children's attainment, including specific groups of children. Staff participate in helpful termly attainment meetings with senior leaders. Staff use information from assessments to plan targeted support for children not on track in their learning. Teachers should develop their confidence in using data to review children's progress. This will help them to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and determine fully if they are improving children's outcomes.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ Teachers use local authority progression pathways and other programmes linked to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes appropriately to plan children's learning. These pathways support children to build upon their prior knowledge and skills. Children have a few opportunities to select the context for learning in aspects of their curriculum. Teachers share helpful class overviews of planned areas of learning termly with parents. They now need to develop progressive pathways for listening and talking, digital technologies and religious and moral education. This will ensure children can build on their knowledge and skills in these curricular areas.

■ Senior leaders are at the early stages of reviewing the curriculum and curriculum rationale. They recognise that they need a clearer focus on the contexts for learning in their local community. The rural location offers children exciting opportunities to learn about the past, present and future. As planned, staff should continue to work with children, parents and the wider community to refresh the curriculum. Senior leaders should support staff to develop a shared approach to how they plan, develop and assess interdisciplinary learning progressively.

■ Children receive two hours of high-quality learning in physical education each week. They learn French from P5 to P7 and British Sign Language at P6 and P7. This learning is progressive and enables children to build on their prior learning. However, children do not currently receive their full entitlement to modern languages as outlined in national guidance. Senior leaders should ensure children learn a modern language from P1 and a second language from P5 onwards.

■ Children have opportunities to learn outdoors in school grounds and in the local area. These opportunities support children to learn and apply their skills successfully in new contexts. This includes through Forest Learning activities. Staff identify the need to develop regular outdoor learning opportunities for children across the school. Children will benefit from these opportunities to develop the skills they gain while learning outdoors progressively as they move through the school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Senior leaders and staff are committed to supporting children and their families. Senior leaders have recently introduced a well-received digital communication tool to support enhanced communication with home. This includes sharing examples of children's learning, which helps parents to talk to children about their progress in learning. Parents are also encouraged to share children's achievement outwith school using the digital tool. They are very positive about this new approach.

■ The Parent Council works closely with senior leaders and staff, primarily to fundraise for resources to enhance the experiences of children. The Parent Council are informed about school improvement plans and how staff plan to use their allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). There is significant scope to extend the role of the Parent Council in the strategic planning of improvements across the school.

■ A few parents volunteer their time for the school, for example by supporting an after school club. As planned, senior leaders should continue to explore further ways to encourage parents to participate more fully in the life of the school.

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	satisfactory

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

- Children benefit from mutually respectful relationships with staff. Most children feel safe in school and recognise that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Staff know their children and families well. Almost all children have the confidence to speak to a trusted adult if they need help. As a result, children feel valued, known as individuals, and cared for by staff.

- Staff recognise their role in supporting children's wellbeing. Senior leaders and staff explore regularly the wellbeing indicators during helpful health and wellbeing lessons and assemblies. This is supporting a majority of children to develop their understanding of the relevance of the indicators to their lives. Children need further support to speak confidently about what it means for them to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, responsible, respected and included.

- Teachers use wellbeing webs termly to gather information about children's sense of wellbeing. They use this information to a limited extent to inform discussions with children about what they need to improve their wellbeing. Senior leaders and staff should now make better strategic use of this data to inform targeted interventions and to adapt the health and wellbeing curriculum.

- Children enjoy regular participation in sport and physical education. They appreciate and talk about the value of activities that encourage them to be healthy and active. Children are less confident about the importance of maintaining a nutritious and balanced diet. Staff should extend children's learning about food and health.

- Most children feel their peers behave appropriately and treat each other with respect during learning. A few children struggle to sustain positive relationships during unstructured times. To support this, the headteacher is reviewing the promoting positive behaviour policy with stakeholders, and has introduced a lunchtime 'Reflection Room'. This intervention aims to offer children the opportunity of time out, de-escalation, and to regulate their behaviour. It is not yet realising these aims, with children and parents perceiving the approach as punitive. The headteacher recognises the need to evaluate and review this approach. Staff work well with a few children who struggle to regulate their behaviour. Teachers should extend the use of daily emotional check-ins to proactively address barriers to children's wellbeing.

- Staff require further professional learning in relation to restorative approaches, whole-school nurturing principles and trauma-informed practice. This has the potential to support approaches which help children to understand their feelings, express their needs appropriately, and help staff to use supportive language to resolve situations.

- Senior leaders and staff have developed effective partnerships with agencies and community groups which result in positive outcomes for children. Children's wellbeing needs are met well through school-based supports. Staff should develop how they evaluate fully a child's strengths and development needs when planning interventions. This will help them to identify the

outcomes sought and measure success better. Staff should develop the role of partners in planning and reviewing the impact of interventions.

■ Staff are developing their understanding of statutory duties relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Senior leaders should improve their record keeping, particularly chronologies, to ensure they reflect national guidance. Senior leaders monitor the progress of children who are care experienced and target them for interventions. They now need to develop their approach to considering care experienced children for a coordinated support plan and recording the outcome of this.

■ The headteacher identifies the need to improve the attendance of a few children. She developed an attendance policy and children created videos for parents highlighting the importance and impact of regular school attendance. A newly-appointed home link worker supports targeted children and families with low attendance. There are early signs of improvement for a few children. Staff need to develop a clearer understanding of the barriers to children attending school regularly. Staff should set ambitious targets for individual children, cohorts and the whole school to demonstrate improvements in attendance. Senior leaders also need to review their use of part-time timetables for a few children. This will support children's sense of belonging to the school community and help them to achieve better outcomes.

■ Support staff work well to identify children requiring assessment for a support need. Children would benefit from more ambitious learning and wellbeing targets, which are reviewed regularly, and with measurable steps to success. This will help staff to assess the impact of interventions used. Support staff should continue to improve how the views of learners and their parents are sought and recorded. Much of the support provided for children with additional support needs is delivered by support staff extracting children from classes. This means they miss aspects of learning and teaching. Senior leaders should now review their model of support to consider how more children can be supported in the classroom. It is important that senior leaders now review this support as part of its wider approaches to inclusion.

■ Staff use anti-bullying campaigns, assemblies and lessons successfully to raise awareness and share messages about kindness. Staff, children, parents and partners should now work together to agree a community approach and develop an anti-bullying policy which reflects the values and context of the school. This will help all children to feel respected and valued. A majority of children identify examples of children's rights confidently and can connect their relevance to their daily lives. All teachers use classroom charters successfully to establish an agreed set of rights-based principles, supporting a positive ethos for learning. A few children in the children's rights group demonstrated their rights in action. They contacted their local councillor seeking support to improve their local playpark. These children demonstrate maturity and responsibility in supporting improvements to their local community.

■ Children are developing their understanding of respect and celebrating diversity through themed assemblies. Staff should now extend children's understanding of the protected characteristics and equal opportunities. This should help children develop a stronger appreciation of the importance of equality and fairness in society.

■ The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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 is satisfactory. In 2023, school data indicated that most children achieved appropriate CfE levels in reading, writing and numeracy. However, predictions for the end of this session indicate a decline in attainment in most areas. A majority of children are expected to achieve appropriate levels in reading and writing. Most children at early and first level and a majority of children at second level are predicted to achieve appropriate CfE levels in numeracy and mathematics. Most children with additional support needs make appropriate progress towards their individual targets in learning.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking
■ At early level, most children follow instructions well and attempt to use appropriate body language when listening to others. Children who are on track to achieve first level discuss confidently the plot and characters of texts. They often need support in knowing when to listen to others and when to talk and share their views. Children on track to achieve second level answer literal and inferential questions confidently and explain their thinking well. They would benefit from regular well-planned conversations with adults to help build their vocabulary and knowledge of language. All children need to continue to improve their presentation skills by presenting to different audiences and engaging in further discussions and debates.

Reading
■ At early level, most children choose a story for enjoyment and understand the terms of title, author and illustrator. Children who are on track to achieve first level read with increasing fluency. They confidently discuss their opinion of stories, connected to characters, setting and writer's message. Children on track to achieve first level need more help to identify the features of non-fiction texts, such as the use of a content page, headings and sub-headings. Children who are on track to achieve second level demonstrate effective reading skills such as skimming, scanning and predicting. They need to increase their understanding and use of a range of genres. Children need to develop their enjoyment in reading and exposure to a range of literature. This will help children to develop further their reading skills in school and home.

Writing
■ At early level, the majority of children form most lower case letters legibly, leaving a space between words when writing. Children who are on track to achieve first level demonstrate confidence expressing their ideas and emotions through imaginative writing. They need to improve their accurate use of punctuation and strengthen their understanding of persuasive writing. Children who are on track to achieve second level present their writing in a clear and

legible way, showing confidence in their presentation and layout skills. Children who are on track to achieve second level need to routinely review and correct their own writing to ensure it make sense, is technically accurate and meets its purpose.

Numeracy and mathematics
■ Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in attainment in numeracy and mathematics. Across all stages, children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to revisit learning to consolidate their understanding.

Number, money and measure
■ At early level, most children demonstrate skills of estimation in the contexts of number and measure using relevant vocabulary. Children who are on track to achieve first level explain what a fraction is using concrete materials, pictorial representations and appropriate vocabulary. They are not confident in mental agility and recall or in their understanding of the correct notation for common fractions. Children who are on track at second level use knowledge of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages well to solve problems. They would benefit from more exposure to money and budgets.

Shape, position and movement
■ At early level, most children understand and correctly use the language of position and direction. Children who are on track to achieve first level name and identify range of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are less confident in their understanding of terms such as vertex, base and angle. Children who are on track to achieve second level record the location of a point, using co-ordinates, including negative numbers.

Information handling
■ At early level, most children use knowledge of colour, shape, and size to match and sort items in different ways. Children who are on track to achieve first level answer questions to extract key information from a variety of data sets including charts or bar graphs. Children on track to achieve second level collect, organise and display data accurately in a variety of ways including through the use of digital technologies. Overall, children at first and second level need to develop their understanding of chance and uncertainty in every-day situations.

Attainment over time
■ Overall, attainment data over time shows that children are making satisfactory progress at early level and second level. At first level, children's attainment has declined in reading and numeracy. Staff's predictions for the end of this session indicate that children's attainment in reading and writing is declining at all levels. Children's attainment in numeracy at early and second level is also declining. Senior leaders are aware of the need to extend their use of their new monitoring and tracking system to track children's progress more robustly. In doing so, they should identify any trends and patterns in children's attainment and use this to inform discussions with staff around next steps.

Overall quality of learners' achievements
■ Children participate in a wide range of popular clubs, including digital skills, eco and sporting activities. They talk positively about learning in their local community, such as through the intergenerational learning with a local care home or community links with artists. This is developing their confidence, interpersonal skills and sense of respect for their local community.

■ A minority of children adopt leadership roles, such as playground leaders and junior road safety officers. Groups of children benefit from involvement in groups supporting improvements to their school. For example, the pupil council sought children's views to develop the playground. This is developing children's sense of responsibility and their ability to collaborate

with others. Staff should extend these opportunities further to ensure all children develop similar skills and attributes.

■ Children are proud of their achievements in and outwith school which are celebrated well through assemblies and wall displays. Senior leaders should consider how children link their achievements to their learning, to understand better the skills they are developing through their achievements.

Equity for all learners

■ Staff seek to proactively and sensitively support children and families who experience socio-economic disadvantage by addressing barriers in a range of positive ways. A well-attended daily breakfast club is free and open to all children. Staff organised a uniform swap event and families know that the 'Food Share' initiative is available through the school each week. Senior leaders also access additional funding from community businesses to ensure children benefit from experiences such as excursions equitably.

■ Senior leaders use PEF appropriately to employ additional staffing and to engage partners to help individuals progress with their learning. Senior leaders are developing approaches for gathering evidence of the impact of interventions on closing the poverty related attainment gap. They demonstrate early impact of literacy and numeracy interventions on children's progress and improving confidence of a few children targeted for wellbeing support. Senior leaders should continue to work closely with partners to evaluate fully the impact and success of interventions used to close the poverty related attainment gap. They should extend the involvement of children and parents, in decisions relating to PEF.

■ Staff are aware of the importance of broadening children's life experiences to address the challenges of the rural location. They regularly take children out of school and beyond the local area to experience a range of unfamiliar and exciting environments. A few children are benefiting from increased confidence and resilience as a result.

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.