

# Summarised inspection findings

**Sciennes Primary School**

The City of Edinburgh Council

19 September 2023

## Key contextual information

Sciennes Primary School is located in the southside of Edinburgh. The school is co-educational and non-denominational. There are 21 classes, and the current roll is 623 pupils. There are three classes at each stage. Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles seven and above. In 2022/23 the school received £42,875 from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF).

The school was established in 1892. The building was refurbished recently and is currently being extended to accommodate four additional classrooms. St Leonard's Nursery, which is located nearby, became aligned with Sciennes Primary School in August 2021.

The senior leadership team comprises the headteacher, a business manager and three depute headteachers. The team has undergone significant change in recent years, due to staff absence.

### 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

- Across the school there is a strong sense of community and teamwork. Staff know the children well. They develop positive relationships with families and children. Almost all children are enthusiastic learners and engage well when given tasks and activities that offer the appropriate level of challenge. They are confident and independent in their learning and cooperate well with each other in pairs and small groups.
- Most teachers provide a variety of relevant, motivating and engaging activities, which children enjoy. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. In a few classes, children and teachers work together to help children understand how they can be successful in their learning. Teachers across the school should now support children to have a clearer understanding of their own specific learning targets to enable them to reflect on their progress.
- In the majority of lessons, there is an over-reliance on whole-class teaching. Teachers should ensure that children experience more opportunities for differentiation within learning. They should check that they set an appropriate range of levels of tasks and activities. Teachers should support children to have higher expectations of what they can achieve. Children are now ready to have a greater role in leading their own learning.
- Teachers ask questions to check children's understanding. In a few lessons, teachers make effective use of questions to extend children's reflections on their learning and to develop higher-order thinking skills. Teachers should now build on this effective practice and use these techniques more consistently across the school.
- Most children who require additional assistance with their learning benefit from a range of helpful supports. This includes working on a one-to-one basis with staff. Staff ensure that the

impact of this additional support is reviewed regularly to check that children are making the most effective progress.

- Teachers make effective use of interactive technology to support learning in most classes. Children have access to tablet computers and laptop computers and use these confidently to access learning activities. They use a variety of applications to create and display their work, for example presentations about endangered animals. Teachers are beginning to incorporate digital approaches to assess children's work.
- Teachers are developing play across the early stages of the school. Children play freely in the classroom and in the 'discovery den'. Children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through play. Teachers should ensure that play contexts offer more challenge for children and build on prior learning. Teachers should now engage further with the national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'. This will help them to continue to improve their understanding and use of play pedagogy.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers use helpful verbal and written feedback to support children's learning. They give children opportunities to develop the skills of self-assessment and peer-assessment. In a few classes, teachers are developing the use of digital audio files to provide quality feedback to children.
- All teachers carry out standardised, summative and formative assessments. However, there is a lack of consistency of approach. Senior leaders and teachers should now develop a clear and strategic assessment calendar to be used across the school. They need to ensure that planned assessments add value to a body of evidence that shows children's progress in learning. Teachers should take better account of assessment information to plan appropriately challenging next steps in learning. Children require more opportunities to apply their skills and understanding in new contexts and across the curriculum. This would provide teachers with more robust evidence on which to make judgements about children's progress.
- Senior leaders have reintroduced approaches to moderation. Teachers have worked well with colleagues to moderate approaches to play-based learning, writing and digital technology. This is helping to build their confidence in using new approaches to pedagogy and making judgements about children's attainment. All teachers work collaboratively within stages to plan children's learning weekly. This enables them to share knowledge and understanding and to support one another. Senior leaders should now seek appropriate professional learning and more regular opportunities for robust moderation. This will help to develop teachers' understanding of national standards. They should also extend this to include moderation of planning, teaching and assessment.
- Teachers use local authority literacy and numeracy progression pathways to plan children's learning. Currently, teachers' planning does not show consistently how learning is differentiated to meet the needs of all children. Teachers need to plan clearly for assessment and ensure planning reflects where children are in their learning. Senior leaders should work with teachers to introduce clear progression pathways for all areas of the curriculum. This will help to ensure that all children experience appropriate pace and challenge and receive their entitlement to learning across the curriculum. Teachers should also include opportunities for children to plan their own learning. Senior leaders need to monitor planning more rigorously and support teachers to build more effectively on children's prior learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet three times a session to discuss children's progress in literacy and numeracy within each level. They identify children who are predicted to meet or exceed expected levels of attainment and those who are not. Where children are not meeting expected outcomes, senior leaders and teachers plan and agree interventions. Senior leaders

should document clear actions resulting from these discussions with teachers. Senior leaders and teachers should ensure that they monitor more rigorously the impact of all interventions on children's overall attainment. They need to check children's progress over a longer period of time and across other curricular areas. Senior leaders should support teachers to develop greater clarity of understanding and improved accuracy when making judgements about children's attainment.

- Teachers use a range of different methods to gather and organise assessment data. Senior leaders and teachers should now develop a consistent approach to using data effectively to inform planning for learning, teaching and assessment. They also need to use data more effectively to track the progress of particular groups of children. This would help them to identify any gaps in learning and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

## 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

- The school's attainment in literacy and numeracy quickly recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Children's progress at Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early, first and second levels in literacy and numeracy is good. Most children who need additional support are making good progress towards individual targets. Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. This is an important strength in the school's work.
- The most recent data from June 2023 shows that almost all children in P1 have achieved CfE early level in literacy and numeracy. Most children in P4 have achieved first level in listening and talking and in writing. Almost all have achieved first level in reading and numeracy. Almost all children in P7 have achieved second level in listening and talking, reading and numeracy, and most have achieved that level in writing.
- A minority of children in P7 achieved second level in literacy and numeracy early during session 2022/23. There is significant scope to increase the pace of learning for these children to ensure that they are suitably challenged in their learning.

### Literacy and English Listening and talking

- Almost all children are socially articulate, engage in conversation, share ideas and listen well in class. At all levels, a few children find it hard to focus and listen to adults and each other in group work. Across the school, children would benefit from more opportunities to discuss their progress in listening and talking. This will help them to understand how they are developing their skills.

### Reading

- At early level, almost all children enjoy reading and listening to different texts. They read aloud familiar texts with attention to simple punctuation. At first level, almost all children read aloud, adding expression and showing understanding. They identify the main ideas of texts and recognise the difference between fact and opinion. At second level, almost all children read with fluency, understanding and expression from a variety of texts. They explain their preferences for particular texts and authors by referring to genres and writer's skills.

### Writing

- At early level, almost all children enjoy creating their own stories and characters to share with others. They are able to punctuate a sentence using a capital letter and a full stop. At first level, most children write independently using a variety of punctuation. They plan and write texts for different purposes. At second level, most children are knowledgeable about punctuation and grammar and understand how to use paragraphs to organise their writing. They are very clear about the features of different genres of writing.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

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

- At early level, almost all children identify numbers 0-20 and add and subtract mentally to 10. They count backwards and forwards from a given number accurately and confidently. A few children need further practice in recognising a range of coins. At first level, almost all children identify accurately the place value of three- and four-digit numbers. They use a range of strategies to complete calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. At second level, almost all children complete calculations accurately and apply their numerical skills in multi-step calculations. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percentages. A significant minority of children at all stages require further challenge in numeracy and mathematics.

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

- Almost all children at early level recognise, describe, and sort common two-dimensional shapes. They understand and use the language of position and direction to solve simple problems. At first level, almost all children use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At second level, almost all children apply their knowledge to demonstrate understanding of the relationship between three-dimensional objects and their nets.

### **Information handling**

- Almost all children at early level use their skills in sorting and counting to interpret simple charts. At first level, almost all children display data in bar graphs and tables and can extract key information. Almost all children at second level demonstrate a range of different ways to collect, organise and display data, including using digital technology. They successfully analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from data.

### **Attainment over time**

- Children make good progress over time. Senior leaders and teachers use tracking data to support termly attainment conversations. Senior leaders should now review the tracking system to make it easier to analyse the progress of individuals and groups. This will help senior leaders and teachers to identify as early as possible when children require additional support or challenge. Senior leaders should also expand tracking to cover all areas of the curriculum when there is capacity to do so in the school improvement plan.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Staff share and celebrate children's achievements at assemblies, in newsletters and on social media. Parents, staff and partners lead a range of clubs which take place during and after the school day. As a result, children are developing well their skills in, for example, sports, games, music and exploring nature.
- The school has achieved the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award reaccreditation. As planned, staff should now make stronger links between children's rights, Global Goals and other areas of learning.
- Children across the school take on leadership roles, such as digital leaders, equality advisors and sports captains. Senior leaders and teachers should now develop further these opportunities and link them clearly to school improvement. They should also consider developing a skills framework and encourage children to set personal targets against this framework. This will help children to have a deeper understanding of the skills for learning, life and work they are developing.

- Senior leaders track the achievements of children who are eligible for PEF. Senior leaders and teachers should track and monitor the opportunities for all children to achieve. This will help them to ensure that no child is missing out.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders have taken steps to reduce barriers to children's opportunities caused by socio-economic circumstances. The Parent Council and school staff raise funds through a variety of activities, such as the summer and winter fairs. They use the proceeds to contribute to partially meeting the costs of school activities. Children in P6 and P7 attend residential experiences which are partially funded by the Parent Council. The whole school community should continue to work together to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of reducing the cost of the school day.
- Senior leaders use PEF effectively to provide additional staffing to support identified children with literacy, numeracy and emotional wellbeing. Staff track carefully the impact of these interventions and can evidence improvements in attendance and wellbeing. As an important next step, senior leaders should ensure that planned interventions now focus on accelerating the literacy and numeracy attainment of identified children. They should ensure that tracking of attainment is central to their analysis of the impact of the PEF expenditure.



## Other relevant evidence

- 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 sample 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 school meals provider.

## 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.