

# Summarised inspection findings

**Kirkhill Primary School**

West Lothian Council

23 January 2024

## Key contextual information

Kirkhill Primary School is a non-denominational school in Broxburn, West Lothian. The current roll of the school is 255 children across 12 classes. The majority of children reside in decile four, of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones. There is a strategic plan for the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to provide targeted support for individuals and groups of learners.

The headteacher has been in post since November 2018. She has overall responsibility for Kirkhill Primary School, Kirkhill Nursery School and Dechmont Primary School. She is supported by a depute headteacher and two 0.5 FTE acting principal teachers. The acting principal teachers have been in post since August 2023.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- All staff create a very positive and nurturing learning environment for all children at Kirkhill Primary School. They demonstrate strong dedication to improving experiences and outcomes for all children. All staff effectively support children using the school's agreed 'trusted adult' approach. As a result, positive, respectful relationships and interactions are evident across the school. Almost all children feel they have someone to talk to if they are upset or worried about something. Almost all parents feel that their child is treated fairly and with respect and that staff really know their child well as an individual.
- Staff ensure that all learning experiences are underpinned by the school values which are embedded well in the work of the school. Senior leaders and staff display the values throughout the school and refer continually to them in classes and assemblies. The school have achieved national accreditation for their work on children's rights. Children have a strong understanding of their rights as a result of this work.
- Almost all children are attentive and willing to learn. They respond positively to the high expectations set by all staff. Teachers plan learning activities to ensure that children have a balance of working independently, in pairs and in groups. These varied approaches support children's engagement and motivation well. Most staff make regular reference to the world of work during lessons. This supports children to understand the relevance of their learning. All teachers support children to reflect regularly on the skills they are developing during lessons. This supports children to recognise and understand the value of the skills they are developing and confidently apply these in different learning experiences.
- Almost all children enjoy learning and are happy with the quality of teaching. All staff demonstrate a very effective collaborative approach to improving pedagogy. They take part in professional learning and many staff lead improvements in learning, teaching and assessment. Professional learning around the school's updated learning, teaching and assessment policy is

leading to consistency of practice across the school. All teachers provide children with clear explanations and instructions and highlight steps children need to take to be successful in their learning. Most teachers co-construct steps for success with the children. Almost all teachers use questioning well to check for understanding and most use a range of questioning techniques to develop children's thinking skills.

- Children engage with effective peer and self-assessment activities and almost all teachers provide regular helpful feedback to support children in identifying their next steps. As a result of these practices, children are confident in talking about their learning and taking responsibility for improving their work. Most children talk confidently about the personal targets they set in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They enjoy evaluating their progress towards achieving these. As a result, most children are becoming effective in leading their own learning.
- All staff make good use of digital technology to support learning and teaching. Children benefit from regular access to a variety of equipment to enhance learning and develop digital skills. For example, younger children successfully access learning activities using matrix bar codes and older children are developing well their skills in coding. All children successfully engage with online platforms to create a personal profile which is shared with families. Pupil digital leaders effectively support their peers to deepen their skills further. Families have benefitted from an awareness raising session about the school's digital journey led by the digital leaders. The school's new digital progression framework should support children in developing their digital skills in a progressive way.
- Teachers, working across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early and first levels, are developing their understanding of play-based pedagogy. They have created a shared space to encourage role play linked to the world of work. Children use their imagination and develop their creativity and problem-solving skills when using these areas. Teachers ongoing engagement with professional and collaborative learning should support the development of play further and ensure that play is integral to learning. As identified, teachers should develop further their plans for outdoor learning to enhance learning and teaching.
- Assessment is integral part of learning and teaching. Teachers benefit from the clear guidance and timelines as set out in the assessment toolkit and annual assessment calendar. Teachers meticulously gather and analyse both formative and summative assessment. They use data gathered very effectively to plan next steps for all learners. All staff are supported well by senior leaders to reflect on all assessment evidence gathered. Teachers use these reflections to support their planning, differentiating learning where appropriate. As a result, most teachers are meeting the needs of their learners. Almost all parents feel that their child is making very good progress in their learning.
- All teachers engage in regular, well-planned moderation activities both in school and across the learning community. These activities cover all aspects of the moderation cycle. Staff use these opportunities to create helpful non-negotiable agreements. These agreements exemplify a shared understanding of expectations, standards and progression across all CfE levels. As a result, there is consistency of teacher's professional judgement of achievement of a level across the school.
- Over the last few years, staff have developed new more accessible ways to plan for children's learning. All teachers plan an overview of learning across the year, and this informs their short-term plans. Staff plan effectively to meet the needs of all learners. They make effective use of local authority progressive pathways to plan learning across the curriculum. Positively, children are encouraged to contribute their thoughts and ideas to inform and shape future learning.

- Senior leaders have developed very robust and systematic processes to track and monitor all children's progress in learning. They track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders meet with teachers four times per year to discuss and analyse children's progress and attainment. Together, they update a comprehensive overview for each child across the school. Senior leaders and teachers make very good use of a wide range of data to identify and plan appropriate interventions. Teachers meet with support for learning staff and the school's intervention team to discuss the progress of individuals and groups of children. As a result, in consultation with senior leaders, staff adapt, adopt or amend approaches to secure the best possible outcomes for all learners. Staff are beginning to record children's progress in other areas, for example, meta-skills, four capacities, physical education and learner engagement. As planned, they should develop this further to capture children's progress across all curriculum areas.
- Senior leaders have termly meetings with the whole staff team to interrogate attainment data across the school. As part of this, all staff analyse the progress of cohorts and different groups of learners. This includes children who are supported by pupil equity funding and children who have English as an additional language. This allows all staff to understand the whole school context and helps them to discuss the impact of improvements and plan future 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

very 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, most children across the school achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing and numeracy in P1, P4 and P7 in June 2023. Almost all children in P1, P4 and P7 attained appropriate national CfE levels in listening and talking. Senior leaders and staff identified that there is a slight dip in attainment in aspects of literacy and numeracy at first and second levels. Staff are taking positive steps to raise the attainment of those children who are not yet on track to achieve expected CfE levels.
- Senior leaders track and monitor systematically the attainment of children who require additional support. Overall, children who require additional support are making good progress towards their specific targets.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen well and contribute to class discussions. At early level, children respond appropriately to questions during class lessons. At first level, children enjoy sharing their views with others. For example, they record information confidently about their learning successes to share with their parents via an online platform. At second level, during group discussion, most children build on each other's ideas well. They are able to identify a few of the techniques they use when presenting to others.

### Reading

- At early level, children are developing their knowledge of initial sounds and are beginning to blend simple words. At first level, children make use of a range of different strategies to read unfamiliar texts. They skim and scan familiar texts for key information. At second level, children read with fluency and understanding. They are able to answer questions about familiar texts. They are less confident answering inferential questions.
- Across the school, it is evident that most children enjoy reading for pleasure and have opportunities to read their chosen books during the school day. Children have good access to a wide range of books in their class libraries and school library.

### Writing

- Staff across the school share a consistent approach for teaching writing. They have created a very effective visual representation of children's progress in writing as they move from early to second level.

- At early level, children are writing for enjoyment as part of play contexts. They are learning to form letters correctly. A few children write simple sentences independently incorporating their new sounds. At the start of first level, children make good use of adjectives in their writing to add detail in their descriptive texts. They make effective use of time connectives and verbs to structure and order instructions. At second level, children are increasing the length of their written texts. They write for a variety of purposes, including letter writing and procedural writing. Across the school, children have a very good understanding of their core targets which is helping them improve the quality of their writing. There is scope for children across the school to improve their handwriting and the presentation of their work.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

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

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

- At early level, most children identify, recognise and order numbers up to 20. They are developing confidence in adding and subtracting within 10. At first level, most children have a very good understanding of place value. They are developing confidence in calculating the total spent and the amount of change required. They need support to add and subtract three-digit numbers confidently. At second level, most children work confidently with numbers up to one million. They can calculate profit and loss and simple percentages of a quantity, for example the sale price of an item with a discount of 20%. They are less confident in measuring the duration of time.

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

- Across the school, children recognise, sort and identify the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects at a level appropriate to their age and stage. At early level, children understand and correctly use the language of positional direction including in front, behind, above and below. Children at first level know that a right angle is 90 degrees. They confidently recognise symmetry in pictures and shapes. At second level, children can use mathematical language including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe a range of angles. They are not yet confident when identifying different triangles such as isosceles, scalene and equilateral.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children use their knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort different items. Children working within first and second level confidently use a variety of different methods to display data. They know to include a suitable title, labelling on both axes and an appropriate scale. Across the school, children need to develop their skills in collecting, displaying and discussing meaningful, real-life data in a variety of ways.

### **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders have developed very effective ways to capture and illustrate children's attainment over time. They meet with teachers termly to analyse and interrogate a wide range of data. This enables them to measure robustly the progress of individual children and different cohorts. They also review the impact of interventions and ensure all children are given appropriate support to make the best possible progress. Consequently, as a result of these successful approaches, most children are making very good progress.
- The headteacher and staff have identified accurately features of attainment which have been impacted by the pandemic. For example, in aspects of reading and writing. Senior leaders and staff are taking successful steps to improve children's attainment in these areas. This includes a wide range of interventions delivered by specialist teachers, support staff, senior

leaders and partners. Senior leaders should maintain the close scrutiny of data to ensure interventions and specialist supports continue to have the best possible impact on children's attainment.

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

- Children across the school have very good opportunities to share and celebrate their achievements through displays, assemblies and online platforms. Children enjoy receiving certificates in recognition of their achievements. They demonstrate confidence and pride when discussing their many achievements, in and out of school. Staff and partners provide an extensive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs including, choir, football, coding, archery and board games. Children enjoy attending the clubs. They are learning new skills, including teamwork, resilience and creativity. Almost all children feel that staff listen to their views. Children's voice is a strength of the school. All children are members of a school committee where they are empowered to reflect on progress and make suggestions for improvement. For example, the House Team have engaged with How Good is OUR School? to evaluate relationships across the school. They have successfully worked with support staff to develop a helpful playground charter.
- Senior leaders track and monitor children's participation in wider achievement opportunities and the skills they are developing. This allows them to identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out. As identified by senior leaders, a next step is to support children to articulate more clearly the skills they are developing.

### **Equity for all learners**

- This is a very strong feature of the school's work. Senior leaders and staff have a very good understanding of the socio-economic factors which affect families in their community. Senior leaders have created a detailed PEF plan which is supporting well children affected by poverty. Senior leaders carefully track the impact of all interventions. There is clear evidence that staff are accelerating the progress of children who are affected by socio-economic challenges and closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- Senior leaders and staff have taken very positive steps to reduce the cost of the school day. They appreciate the support they receive from the Parent Council to help to reduce the costs of school trips and residential experiences. There is a 'cost of the school day' pupil committee who explore and establish ways to minimise financial costs for families. Children are able to access a free daily breakfast club. This is used well by children across the school. Staff also ensure breakfast is available for children who arrive late to school. Families can access a free uniform shop, Christmas gifts and food parcels. Senior leaders and staff have fostered highly effective partnerships with the school community to support parents who are facing financial hardship.
- Senior leaders track and monitor school attendance closely. The school's attendance level is slightly lower than national levels. Following the pandemic, school attendance dipped. Senior leaders are taking steps to improve attendance levels. For example, they work closely with partners to support individual families to improve attendance. As a result, children's attendance is improving across the school.



## Other relevant evidence

- Children at all stages learn French. From early level onwards, they experience progressive lessons that develop their knowledge of the French language. Children in the upper stages of primary also learn Spanish. All children receive their entitlement to two hours of physical education (PE). Class teachers use the local authority progression framework to plan PE. They ensure a range of skills are developed and revisited over the year. Children receive their entitlement to religious education. They learn through a progressive religious and moral education programme. Children participate in religious observance through attending services across the school year including Harvest and Christmas.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership for the school community. She has a clear vision for the school and a deep commitment to improving outcomes for all children. She is providing strong, measured leadership and direction, supported very well by the depute headteacher. She motivates and empowers staff and the wider community to lead school improvement. All staff's commitment to professional learning is having a positive impact on children's experiences and is supporting continual improvement of teaching and learning.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

### **QI 2.3 & QI 3.2 Robust approaches to monitoring and tracking which leads to effectively planned universal and targeted approaches to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy.**

This is a strong example of effective monitoring and tracking processes used effectively to secure improved outcomes for all learners.

- Across the school, there is consistent approaches to measuring children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff use a variety of assessment approaches to measure children's progress in learning effectively.
- Senior leaders, through Equity and Excellence meetings, held regularly across the year, support staff to analyse a range of data. Together, they create a comprehensive overview of progress for each child across the school. Individuals and groups of children with gaps in their learning are identified.
- In liaison with the support for learning team, interventions are established to address any gaps in children's learning. These interventions are monitored very effectively to ensure improved outcomes and a positive impact on attainment.
- Senior leaders ensure whole school data is shared regularly with all staff. As part of this, staff analyse the progress of cohorts and different groups of learners. This allows staff to understand the whole school context and helps them to discuss the impact of interventions and plan future improvements.

### **QI 3.2 A whole school approach to reducing the cost of the school day involving children, staff and parents.**

Staff at Kirkhill Primary School are acutely aware of the financial challenges facing many families in their community. As such, senior leaders have established highly effective processes and approaches to promote equity for all.

- Senior leaders work with staff to raise awareness of the hidden and visible costs for families. They have in place an Equity Improvement Plan and Pupil Equity Fund Plan.
- Staff make parents aware of the different ways the school can help them if they are experiencing financial hardship. For example, by providing food parcels, clothing and Christmas gifts.
- Senior leaders and staff are proactive in fostering strong links with local partners to provide timely and much needed support for many of their families.
- They work closely with the Parent Council to minimise the financial burden for families during the year. They have created a helpful audit outlining the different costs/expenses for parents. For each cost, they have identified a way to either remove or reduce this.
- A teacher leads a very successful pupil 'cost of the school day' committee. As part of this, children explore the impact of poverty and identify different ways in which the school can support families. For example, they are in the process of setting up a 'helpful hands' hut which will provide families with an on-school food bank. They have also identified different ways to make resources such as bikes and toys available for families.

## 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.