![Education Scotland — Foghlam Alba logo]

Summarised inspection findings

Letham Primary School and Nursery Class

West Lothian Council

12 November 2019

Key contextual information

Letham Primary School is located in Livingston, in the longest established area of town. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 199, with 66 children attending nursery. The headteacher was appointed in August 2018 having previously been the depute headteacher. She is supported in school by an acting depute headteacher and acting principal teacher (PT).
Around half of the children attending school are registered for free school meals. Almost all children attending the school live in SIMD deciles 1-3.

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	

■ There is a warm and welcoming ethos across the school. Children and staff feel valued by each other, parents and partners. They feel listened to and their views are regularly sought and acted upon. Across the school, children are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Most children interact well during learning activities and across the majority of classes have opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. In most lessons there are positive relationships between teachers and children. However, in a few lessons, a small number of children are not fully engaged in learning.

■ In most lessons across the school, teachers give clear instructions and explanations. However, these introductions often take too long and children become passive. In most lessons, teachers use questioning to check children's understanding. In the best practice, teachers ask questions which probe children's thinking, encourage fuller responses and require children to justify their answers. In the best examples, learning activities provide an appropriate level of challenge and enable children to engage in higher order thinking. In too many lessons, however, learning experiences are not sufficiently challenging and the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers need to plan a greater range of open-ended tasks to enable children to draw on their learning across the curriculum. These tasks should be designed to promote the development of higher order thinking and have opportunities to lead their own learning. We have asked the staff team to reflect on the shape of the school day and maximise learning time. There is scope to make more effective use of learning and teaching time at the start and towards the end of the day. Children are well supported by a range of staff. Additional support staff have been employed to support learning in class and in small group activities. These targeted interventions are focused on closing the attainment gap. We have asked school leaders to reflect on individual children's daily experiences, and give consideration to ensuring all children have access to their entitlement of a broad general education on a regular basis. Children being withdrawn from class too often miss learning and teaching with their teacher and peers.

■ In the majority of lessons children are aware of the purpose of their learning. In a few lessons, children have the opportunity to identify and agree on how to be successful. In almost all classes oral feedback is given to children throughout lessons. Written feedback is of variable

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quality and regularity. Too many pieces of children's work have not been appropriately assessed or monitored. This has an impact on the quality of children's work, and in presentation standards. Staff should agree shared expectations and standards for written feedback across the curriculum. Higher quality feedback should be linked to features of success, to help children understand and articulate their next steps in their learning. As staff continue to improve learning and teaching across the school there is scope for children to be more effectively involved in self and peer assessment.

■ Teacher involvement in a local teaching and learning community (TLC) has resulted in staff being more aware of formative assessment strategies. In the best teaching, these strategies are used effectively during the course of teaching to monitor the learning of individual children and provide additional support as required. Across the school, there is not yet consistently high quality learning, teaching and assessment for all learners. As identified by the school, staff would benefit from working together to develop a shared understanding of what effective learning, teaching and assessment looks like. The school is developing approaches to assessment of children's learning. A few lessons conclude with a structured plenary which informs teachers' planning for suitable next steps in children's learning. This good practice in formative assessment now needs to be adopted more widely across the school. Most teachers use Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) effectively to plan next steps in learning. They are beginning to use National Benchmarks to support professional judgements. There is scope to develop teachers' understanding and confidence in the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels to ensure that professional judgements are based on robust evidence. Children's progress within Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy is recorded at key points. Whilst a range of evidence of learning is used to judge children's progress, there is a need to develop a shared understanding of the standards expected across curricular areas. There is scope to improve staff and children's engagement in planning and evaluating learning. As identified through self-evaluation processes all staff should continue to further develop the implementation of the moderation cycle. This will support consistency and reliability of professional judgements.

■ Digital technology is used well as part of targeted interventions for children who need additional help in their learning. In most classes technology is used to support teaching via interactive screens. There should be more planned opportunities for all children to use digital technology to support and enhance learning across the curriculum. Children told us they felt equipment was not always available when they wanted to access digital tools or resources.

■ The West Lothian tracking system is implemented effectively across the school which supports the termly 'Excellence and Equity' meetings with all staff. The school team should continue to develop robust approaches to using the range of assessment information gathered to effectively plan appropriate learning and teaching. Approaches to planning should be reviewed to offer staff and children more flexibility across learning and teaching and reduce bureaucracy. Staff recognise the need to ensure they focus on a manageable number of improvement priorities which have positive impact on outcomes for children.

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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.

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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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The majority of children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Teachers are improving their understanding of standards to increase the robustness of professional judgements. There is scope to ensure all children are challenged and achieve their full potential. The data gathered now needs to be streamlined and simplified so that key information is easily accessible to all staff. All teachers should continue to engage regularly in professional dialogue relating to children's progress and raising attainment. Monitoring and tracking discussions should lead to action in the classroom and impact on children's learning and progress.

- The school presented data predicting children's attainment levels for June 2019. Inspection activity, including lesson observation, sampling of children's work, analysis of assessment information and focus groups does not support teacher judgement. However, we agree that there are emerging signs of improved attainment at early and second level.

- The majority of children across the school are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. Children who need additional support with their learning are making satisfactory progress.
  Children are not yet making sufficient progress across the wider curriculum. The school also recognises the need to ensure children develop skills for learning, life and work.

Literacy and English

- The overall quality of attainment in literacy and English language is satisfactory. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress at early and second level. Staff have identified the need to improve attainment at first level.

Listening and Talking

- Across the school children are friendly, and enthusiastic to engage with their classmates, teachers and visitors. At early level children enjoy listening to stories, and are developing skills in recall and prediction. They continue to need support to widen their spoken vocabulary. Children working towards first level show their understanding of what they have heard by responding to questions, and giving a personal view. At second level, children can explain the difference between fact and opinion. In their eagerness to participate and engage, children at all stages need to develop skills in listening to others contributions and in taking turns. Children would benefit from planned regular opportunities to develop tools for listening and talking in pairs, groups and trios. Teacher's assessment of listening and talking is overly positive.

Reading

- Children enjoy access to a wide range of texts in school. Children are proud of the newly developed library where reading for pleasure and information is promoted and enhanced,

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supported by a librarian. At early level most children are developing confidence in simple tools for reading. They hear and say different single sounds and read familiar text aloud. A few use pictures well to support their understanding. The majority of children working towards first level can find key information in texts provided during reading tasks. In reading aloud, they are beginning to make appropriate use of punctuation to support understanding and expression. Older children talk with confidence about their favourite books and authors. They enjoy reading across a range of genre and particularly appreciate humour. An author visit inspired their interest in reading more complex texts, however to support improvement, children should be encouraged to choose and tackle more challenging novels.

Writing

■ A whole school approach to improving writing is beginning to have a positive impact, but standards and expectations are not yet consistent across the school. Children's handwriting and presentation is of variable quality across the school. There is need for staff to model quality in any writing they share with children. Most children at early level make successful attempts to write and spell familiar words correctly in simple sentences. At first level, the majority of children are developing skills in using simple punctuation. They use phonics to help their spelling. A few need support to include relevant information in written texts. Children at second level can write for a range of purposes. For example, they spent several lessons crafting a balanced argument. Children told us they enjoy writing and would like more time to write about topics they choose themselves. Most children at second level can use a range of punctuation, and the majority use paragraphs when prompted. All children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write at length. They would also benefit from reading and writing poetry and scripts. We have asked staff to ensure children have regular opportunities to demonstrate and apply their writing skills in real life situations across the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers should plan increased opportunities for children's numerical skills to be developed within meaningful and relevant contexts. In a few good examples teachers discuss with children how these skills relate to learning, life and work. Children would benefit from opportunities to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar situations. Over the school year teachers cover a broad range of numeracy and maths content. They should now aim for greater depth and richness of learning in order to meet the needs of all children.

Number, money and measure

■ Children working at early level confidently double numbers up to a total of ten. They are less confident applying their skills of addition when using 1p, 2p, 5p and 10p coins to pay the exact value of an item. At first level most children tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to using analogue clocks. They can record 12 hour times using am and pm and select appropriate tools for timing a sprint race and baking a cake. There is scope to improve their knowledge of multiplication and division facts to solve problems. At second level the majority of children order numbers less than zero from smallest to largest. They use effectively their knowledge of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. They lack confidence in using their knowledge of simple percentages to calculate the cost of a sale item. Most children have difficulty calculating the area of a square, confusing area for perimeter.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level most children are able to use the language of position and direction including, in front, behind, above, below, forwards and backwards. By first level the majority of children recognise right angles in the space around them. They have insufficient knowledge of the

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properties of 3D objects. Children at second level know that a complementary angle adds up to 90⁰ and supplementary angles add up to 180⁰. They know that the radius of a circle is half of the diameter.

Information handling

■ At early level most children are able to create and interpret simple bar graphs. They create pictorial displays about their favourite play park equipment. Some children develop their skills further by using digital technology to create bar graphs. Further work needs to be done to improve information handling skills at first and second level. They should be given opportunities to develop these skills across learning and develop the digital skills introduced at early level.

Attainment over time

■ The school does not yet have robust information about children's attainment over time. The new leadership team has taken steps to gather data. A significant number of children frequently change school. As a result, there is a need to focus on cohorts and individual progress, rather than class stages. For example, staff have identified the need to monitor children who are regularly absent or late. The same children also miss time out of class during interventions. Improvements to whole school approaches to assessment and moderation will support teachers in making professional judgements.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ Staff are working well together to offer children access to a range of wider achievements. The children have opportunities to participate in a variety of school clubs such as Arts and Crafts, Writing Club, Maths Games, Badminton and Basketball. A few enjoy leadership opportunities, including as ambassadors in the playground and supporting younger children with reading. Staff have begun to track wider achievement and participation. Staff should continue to take appropriate steps to enable all children to participate in opportunities for personal achievement beyond the classroom. Out of school achievements are recognised and celebrated at assemblies, in displays and through social media. Staff should support children to recognise the skills they are learning and how they might apply these in their learning and lives. We have asked staff to review this aspect of school life to ensure equity and ensure no children are at risk of missing out.

Equity for all learners

■ All staff have a sound understanding of the social context of the school. They know their children well and are aware of children who experience barriers to their learning. Pupil Equity Funding has been used to employ additional staff including a librarian, family support worker and pupil support workers. Support staff have been trained in the range of interventions they deliver. Identified children experience regular support. There are emerging signs of progress against the targeted interventions. The school is at the early stages of linking this progress across the literacy and numeracy curriculum. The school should ensure that intervention activity is having a positive impact across children's learning and class work. Teachers would like to be more involved in planning and supporting these interventions. We have asked staff to monitor the impact of these approaches on children's learning across the curriculum. A significant minority of children miss learning in class and have reduced time with teachers. The school has identified the need to embed quality nurturing approaches across all aspects of school life.

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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.

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