

Summarised inspection findings

St Monica's Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

21 May 2019

Key contextual information

The roll at the time of the inspection was 233 pupils. Attendance has been below national averages in recent years. The percentage of children being excluded has fallen but remains above the national average. Twenty-six percent of children at P4-P7 were entitled to free school meals, above the national average. Seventy-two percent of children came from homes in zones 1 and 2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). The school received £73,200 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from the Scottish Government for 2018-19.

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 focus on the development of positive relationships. This results in a calm and caring environment. Children are polite and well behaved, and respect others. The school ethos is supported by its Catholic values and all staff show a clear commitment to children's wellbeing. In most classes children organise and gather their own resources and materials for their tasks and activities. Most children engage well with their learning activities and are motivated to learn and to achieve.
- In most lessons, learning is well planned, organised and managed. Learning activities match the needs of most children, and differentiation is evident in lessons and follow-up tasks. Most children listen well to the teachers, but a few need to develop their skills in listening to each other. In the majority of lessons observed the teaching staff adopted agreed whole-school approaches. These were effective and motivating and encouraged greater participation from the children. The headteacher has identified the need to refresh and review teacher-led approaches to increase children's participation and present children with further opportunities to lead their own learning. Children would benefit from opportunities to work together in more innovative and creative contexts supporting increased participation. A few lessons observed were very well paced and supported able children in their enthusiasm to learn.
- The quality of teaching across the school includes a number of good features. In most classes, teachers take account of the children's views and their contribution to learning is valued. Children can articulate clearly a number of strategies and skills they use in their learning. All teachers share the purpose of learning with their children and discuss what would make the learning successful for them. Most teachers encourage aspirational learners and engage children well in their learning. Teachers should continue to develop and share good practice, to further engage children in active learning approaches and increase their level of participation.
- Teachers and children make use of digital technology to support learning. An information and communications technology suite is used by classes to promote internet safety, coding and other approaches to learning. Teachers use interactive boards in the classroom and children use laptops and devices in class where appropriate. These devices are used both to support children with individual needs and to vary approaches to knowledge gathering and recording.

Children's progress in digital learning could benefit from continued further development and a clear digital technology strategy across the school.

- All children have had an opportunity to participate in the world of work programme and various speakers from the wider community bring their expertise to school to share with the children. Children recently attended a media studio to learn about making television programmes and media employment opportunities.
- Across the school, teachers and support staff make appropriate use of questioning. Children are encouraged to think about their answers in class and articulate their learning strategies. The headteacher and leadership team have been promoting shared and agreed approaches to aspects of teaching and learning. Following on from authority guidance in lesson content and delivery, a more consistent approach is now beginning to impact on children's attainment. Further robust tracking and monitoring will offer guidance to staff to support appropriate interventions for children.
- Teachers feedback to the children is variable across the school. This feedback is given verbally and as written commentary in children's jotters and workbooks. This should be developed further to be more consistent and focus on the children's strengths and their next steps for improvement.

Effective use of assessment

- Approaches to assessment are being developed across the school through a planned assessment calendar. Staff use a body of evidence including a range of summative assessments and teacher professional judgement to support assessment decisions. Teachers maintain assessment folders and each child has an assessment jotter. While teachers gather assessment information in literacy and numeracy, there is a need for this to become more integral to the planning of learning and teaching.
- Children working at first and second Curriculum for Excellence levels are evaluating their work in literacy and numeracy. In most classes there is good practice in peer- and self-assessment. However, staff should continue to develop consistency in assessment across all stages in the school. Children are able to discuss their own learning and that of others. Staff should continue to develop clearer individual targets, to increase children's understanding of where they are in their learning and to support focused improvements.
- Staff engagement in moderation activities is at the early stages. The school's planned approaches to developing robust moderation include a lead Pedagogy Practitioner. Further deeper engagement with all areas of the moderation cycle will support staff becoming more confident and accurate in their professional judgements. Teachers would benefit from regular opportunities for professional dialogue within and beyond the school.
- Planning for assessment, using holistic and periodic assessments, is at the very early stages of development. Staff at all stages should ensure greater opportunity for children to apply their learning in different contexts. All staff should continue to engage with the National Benchmarks and the local authority progression pathways, to develop consistent and shared high expectations of learning at all stages across the school.

Planning, tracking and monitoring

- Collaboratively, the school has recently developed a more coherent approach to planning using the local authority progression pathways. There is evidence that learners' views are taken account of in the planning for learning and inform decisions about teaching and learning. The school now needs to embed the newly developed approaches to planning, to ensure effective

delivery of the broad general education across all curricular areas and the four contexts for learning.

- Staff use the school's digital system to track and monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This approach is providing the school with an overview of additional needs including those relating to socio-economic groups and other barriers to learning. Staff are beginning to use this valuable information to inform planning for learning and teaching. Staff have developed a better understanding of attainment at a class and school level, and are able to discuss the benefits of the whole school approach to tracking and monitoring.
- Staff are beginning to develop their skills of data analysis through additional 'Equity Time,' which they are given to engage with school data to monitor progress, identify gaps in learning and plan appropriate interventions. Termly attainment meetings are in place to review the progress of all children. Individuals requiring additional support are identified. The school should continue to improve the effectiveness of its approaches to monitor and track the progress of all children, to inform decisions about learning, teaching and meeting children's needs.

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 overall quality of children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. The school provided evidence on children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for 2017-2018 which shows that, in P1, almost all children achieved early level in reading, writing, listening and talking. At P4, most children achieved first level for reading and listening and talking, and the majority in writing. Most children achieved second level in reading, writing, listening and talking in P7. In numeracy, almost all children achieved early level in P1, the majority achieved first level in P4, and most achieved second level in P7.

English and literacy

- Data provided by the school for March 2019 predicts that, by the end of P1, most children will have achieved early level in reading, and the majority of children will have achieved early level in writing and listening and talking. By the end of P4, most children are predicted to have achieved first level in reading, writing and listening and talking. By the end of P7, most children are predicted to have achieved second level in reading and writing, and almost all in listening and talking.
- A range of inspection evidence indicates that teachers' professional judgements are accurate for reading and writing. In listening and talking, professional judgements are not yet sufficiently accurate. Increased moderation activities and engagement with National Benchmarks will support the accuracy of professional judgements in listening and talking, particular at second level.
- Most children are attaining well, including those children who might face additional barriers to achievement as a result of socio-economic factors. A number of interventions and outside agency contributions support children who are not achieving expected levels, with evidence of a positive impact on attainment.
- The majority of children working towards first level are on track to make appropriate progress in literacy. Most children working towards second level are on track to make appropriate progress in literacy, with almost all children at P6 on track to achieve second level in listening and talking. Overall, attainment in literacy is good and children are making good progress.

Reading

- Most children's attainment in reading is good. At early level, most can identify a range of initial sounds. They can identify common words in texts and use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. Children working towards first level enjoy reading and can confidently identify their favourite books and authors. In focus groups, children are able to read a familiar text aloud, with fluency and expression. Children at second level can discuss the purpose of a text and make relevant comment on key ideas and features of language. The

school should review the use of the school library and engagement with reading initiatives, to encourage reading for enjoyment and to give children opportunities to make personal choices about what they like to read.

Writing

- Most children's attainment in writing is good. Children at the early level form letters correctly and legibly, spell common words accurately and use a capital letter and a full stop accurately in a sentence. At first level children write for a range of purposes and audiences. They make use of accurate punctuation, spelling and common conjunctions. Children working at second level can write for a range of purposes, demonstrating knowledge of conventions of genres, including narrative, recount and instructions. Children have good opportunities to write at length and they present their work well. At both first and second level children are able to apply well-established spelling strategies, to spell accurately in writing contexts across the curriculum.
- At all stages there is evidence of written feedback for children's writing. However, the quality of feedback varies widely and staff should continue to develop their skills in making more specific comment.
- Although children have targets for writing, they are too general and children were unable to articulate what these targets were. Children would benefit from having individual targets that clearly show children's next steps in learning.

Listening and talking

- Children at early level answer questions appropriately and share their ideas. At first level children share their views and communicate clearly. They are able to discuss features of the text they are reading. At second level children are less confident to contribute effectively to group discussions, engage with others and offer their own view points. Children require more opportunities to develop a range of skills, for example, through working in groups and pairs. Children should be given further opportunities to present to their peers and participate in activities such as debates. The school needs to ensure a clearer focus on the teaching and moderation of listening and talking skills at all stages.

Mathematics and numeracy

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, teaching and learning approaches in numeracy and mathematics are consistent and agreed. All children benefit from established, daily mental agility sessions and number talks. Children are encouraged to articulate their thinking to their peers, at times drawing on approaches taken from a school initiative aimed at giving learning clearer structure.

Number, money and measure

- At early level children count forwards and backwards from a given number. They describe and recognise coins and know their value. At first level most children know place value and can round up to the nearest ten, hundred and thousand. Children can articulate addition, subtraction and multiplication skills and can identify a number of strategies to find the answers. Most children have an understanding of simple fractions. They can name the numerator and denominator and explain what is meant by a mixed number. They can change simple fractions to percentages and decimal equivalents. A few can apply a successful strategy for a complex shopping problem. They know the difference between digital and analogue time. They were aware of months of the year and their sequence. At second level most children understand place value and can round up to 10,000. Most children can simplify fractions and are secure on equivalence of fractions to decimal and percentage quantities. Most children can successfully find the correct change from a complex shopping bill and almost all are aware of debit and credit card differences.

Shape, position and movement

- Children working at early level can describe a range of shapes and discuss their properties. At first level children can draw and recognise a right angle, including those in their surroundings such as door frames. At second level children can draw and recognise, acute and obtuse angles. They can identify the radius of a circle and know the relationship between radius and the diameter. Children recognise a range of 2D and 3D shapes and can describe them according to their properties. Most children recognise and can identify two lines of symmetry.

Data handling

- Children at all stages are developing their understanding of data. They are learning how to analyse data and draw knowledge from various representations of gathered and collated information. Children sort and display information as bar charts, graphs, tally marks and Venn diagrams. Teaching staff should further develop contextual opportunities for gathering data for graphs, and further develop children's data handling skills. There is scope for children across the school to create and use a wider range of data, including applications of digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy, in recent years, has been good overall. Children's positive performance has been supported by a number of well-judged approaches and initiatives, led strongly by the headteacher. Teachers' increasing skills in assessment and use of attainment data are having an impact on sustaining children's attainment at positive levels. Staff continue to take part in professional learning in, for example, moderation of standards and understanding of children's achievement of a level. These experiences are helping to enhance skills and confidence in assessing children's progress, to support learning and teaching and to promote continuing improvements in attainment. Staff track the progress of children whose social or economic disadvantage puts their attainment at risk. Working well with partners, the school ensures effective support for all children, including those requiring enhanced provision, at transition from nursery into P1, and from P7 into secondary school. Children who receive support to address any additional learning needs make good progress towards targets which are planned for them.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children achieve well in respect of awareness, knowledge and skills relating to responsible citizenship, for example, by taking on one of the many duties available to contribute to the life of the school. These duties include class and school tasks, such as monitors and buddies, House Captains and Junior Road Safety Officers, roles which build children's confidence in contributing to their community and develop their social skills. Staff use these experiences well to provide children with real-life contexts such as applying, and being interviewed, for posts. The children rise well to these challenges, laying foundations for skills relevant to the world of work. Children develop their self-assurance by leading assemblies, and helping present workshops for parents on areas such as internet safety and aspects of mathematics. The leadership, which children demonstrate clearly in these and other contexts, should be more consistently developed across the curriculum and within the school day. Children in decision making groups, and the Eco, Fairtrade and Rights Respecting groups, improve their awareness of the benefits of teamwork, building on others' ideas and contributions and achieving more by collaborating. Children achieve well in music, including the choir's recent noteworthy performance at the Glasgow Music Festival. Children's high quality performances in a range of sports and their achievements as Sports Ambassadors, helped the school achieve Silver Sports Award status. Working with a professional chef, children developed skills in preparing and serving food for a 'banquet'. Parents and children learn and achieve together in a range of important joint activities provided by the school and community learning and development (CLD) staff. Overall, children's achievements are celebrated well, for example, at

assemblies and in displays around the school. Importantly, the school has made good progress in beginning to record children's wider achievements including those out of school.

Equity for all learners

- With a strong lead from the headteacher, staff ensure the issue of equity has a high profile, in keeping with the needs of the school community. Working closely with parents and partner agencies, and with an ethos rooted in its community of faith, the school has developed a keen awareness and deep understanding of the potentially damaging effects of social and economic disadvantage. The school receives high quality, relevant data from the local authority and national agencies. These data help identify children at risk of underachievement due to social, economic, developmental and educational barriers. Staff plan systematically to address any needs, at times drawing on additional staffing and material resources provided through the Scottish Government's PEF. The school's highly professional approach to nurture, funded in part by PEF, is commended by parents, achieving its goal of supporting children's return to mainstream classes as soon as is appropriate. Sensitive, discreet financial support is provided to ensure that no child misses out on enriching educational experiences. All children are able to take part in worthwhile educational excursions each year, to fulfil the school's aim of providing them with a knowledge of their wider world, and experiences which are enjoyable and stimulating in themselves. Drawing on important contributions from CLD staff, and a range of strong partnerships, the school is proactive in extending support to families as part of its successful strategies for ensuring equity for all children.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's work in nurture has some very strong features. The acting principal teacher leading nurture has instigated a local nurture teacher support group which meets to share good practice. The group includes colleagues from both primary and secondary schools.

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.