Summarised inspection findings

St Andrew's RC Primary School

Midlothian Council

19 September 2023

Key contextual information

St Andrew's Primary School and Complex Needs Provision is a Roman Catholic (RC), co-educational school located in Gorebridge. The school serves the catchment area of Newtongrange, Gorebridge, Stobhill and a number of outlying villages. The primary school currently has a role of 153 children organised across seven classes, with 10 children in the complex needs provision. The nursery class has 27 children aged between three and those not yet attending school. The nursery class is located within the school building.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) indicates that the majority of children who attend the school live in deciles one to three.

The Leader of Learning was appointed on a temporary basis in August 2020. This position was made permanent in August 2022. They are supported by two principal teachers who job share in the mainstream school and one principal teacher in the complex needs provision. The Leader of Learning has overall responsibility for the primary school, complex needs provision and nursery class.

The school has faced significant challenges due to staff absence over recent years.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	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	

■ Across St Andrew's Primary School, there is a warm, friendly, and supportive ethos. Senior leaders and staff work well together to create a safe and nurturing environment which reflects the school's values and those underpinned by the RC Gospel Values. Children talk positively about these values and how these are developed across the school. Relationships between staff and children, and among children are very positive. All children are treated respectfully, with patience and understanding. Children are, well-mannered, friendly, and proud of their school. Most children listen well and are respectful and supportive towards each other.

■ Teachers and learning assistants know children well as individuals and create nurturing, engaging classroom environments which support children's learning. Most children are motivated, engaged and interact well with their learning as a result. Staff recognise the importance of outdoor learning. They make good use of the school's different environments to support learning well. Across the school, staff have developed a collaborative and proactive approach to professional development which enhances children's progress in learning. For example, professional learning in digital literacy has supported staff to identify the appropriate technology to support children's individual learning needs.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. They ensure learning experiences are interesting and relevant. Staff use an effective balance of group,

paired and independent tasks to support learning well. Most children engage confidently and cooperatively with their learning. Almost all children believe that staff help them to progress in their learning. Across all stages, children would benefit from developing a greater awareness and understanding of how their learning helps them to develop skills for leaning, life and work.

- In most lessons, teachers provide learning activities which are well matched to children's individual needs. In a few lessons, there is scope to increase pace and challenge of learning to ensure it is set at the right level of difficulty. Overall, staff use questioning effectively to consolidate learning. They should now increase their use of questioning to support deeper thinking and learning, affording children opportunities to reason and analyse. In most classes, children receive useful verbal feedback from teachers. Teachers should continue to develop this approach to further improve children's understanding of their individual learning journey. Across the school, children would benefit from more opportunities to apply their skills in unfamiliar situations. This will show the depth of their understanding and their ability to apply learning in new contexts and across the curriculum.

- In most lessons, staff use digital tools and resources well to consolidate and enhance children's learning and skills. For example, teachers use interactive whiteboards to support lessons. Across the school, children use a variety of technologies with confidence, such as tablets, laptops and applications to support, consolidate and extend learning, as well as in supporting their independent learning and choice. Staff are becoming increasingly skilled at adapting tablet computers to make learning more accessible for children who have particular needs. This includes using a coloured overlay, and dictation and text reading aloud functions.

- In the majority of classes, the teachers share the purpose of the learning with children at the start of lessons. They discuss with children how they know they will be successful. In a few classes, teachers refer to this during the lesson to help children reflect on their learning. Children are ready to take more responsibility for co-constructing success criteria with their teachers and in leading their own learning.

- At P1, there has been a positive start to developing play pedagogy with children at the early level. Staff plan direct teaching of groups and play opportunities well. The principles of Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020) are being used effectively to plan for quality interactions, spaces and experiences, rooted in play. Children can access play freely at appropriate times to consolidate and explore new learning. Staff should continue to evaluate the quality of their work to ensure that the play approaches offer sufficient challenge and progression for all children. As planned, they should continue to develop the outdoor space to enhance further children's learning. Teachers and nursery practitioners working across early level should now identify more opportunities to work closely together. This would ensure pedagogical approaches are more consistent and maximise children's progress.

- Teachers across the school use a range of assessment approaches to evidence children's progress. There are clear processes in place for gathering assessment evidence from both standardised and summative assessments. Staff use assessment data to inform their planning. Staff record children's progress in literacy and numeracy through a class tracking overview.

- In the majority of classes, there is evidence of opportunities for self and peer assessment. Across the school teachers should consider the role of the children in assessing their own progress and identifying their successes and next steps in learning. Children should have more opportunities to talk about their learning, the knowledge they are acquiring, their progress and skills.

- Across the school, teachers participate in moderation activities in literacy in addition to regular opportunities to engage in professional dialogue with each other. This is developing their

professional judgement of children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels. There is potential to further develop opportunities for teachers to be involved in moderation activities across the curriculum. Teachers should develop further their understanding of national attainment standards by collaborating with colleagues from other schools.

■ Senior leaders meet staff regularly to track and monitor children's learning and progress in literacy and numeracy. This supports them to have an accurate understanding of children's attainment. Staff are aware of individual learner's progress and any barriers to learning. Interventions to support learning are monitored and reviewed regularly to ensure they are impacting positively on all children's progress. Targets for children with additional support needs need to be clearly based on learning and shared regularly with the parents and children. This will support children to recognise their achievements and next steps in learning.

■ Senior leaders are aware of the need to develop a more robust system to monitor and track the progress of groups of learners. This includes those who are most affected by disadvantage. As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop a clearer overview of children's progress over time as they move through the school. Staff would then be better enabled to identify trends and patterns in children's attainment.

■ Overall, teachers' planning approaches across the school are clear and consistent. There are clear learning pathways in place for literacy and numeracy.Teachers need to ensure their planning provides all children with progressive and appropriately challenging learning opportunities across the curriculum.

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

■ Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children at first and second levels are making good progress from previous levels of attainment. At early level, the majority of children are making good progress. Across the school, a few children are making very good progress.

■ Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress towards their targets.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Across the school, most children are making good progress in listening, talking, reading and writing in line with national expectations.

Listening and talking
■ Overall, most children are confident and happy to talk and contribute their ideas. At early level, most children follow simple instructions and share ideas within a small group. At first level, most children confidently offer ideas and opinions. At second level, most children confidently offer their viewpoint and can build on the contribution of others. Across the school, a few children need reminded to take turns and listen to others in a respectful way during discussions.

Reading
■ At early level, the majority of children recognise initial sounds and simple blends. They are building confidence in reading common words using their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns. They recognise these in simple texts. Children would now benefit from further development of their reading skills through engaging with a variety of different texts. At first level, children talk about books based on their knowledge of the author or genre. They read aloud a familiar piece of text using punctuation to add expression and make predictions about texts. They recognise features of fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, most children read aloud with fluency and understanding. They select texts for enjoyment and talk about different authors and types of texts they enjoy. At second level, children recognise and use aspects of language, such as, metaphor, simile and alliteration in reading tasks. At first and second levels, all children would benefit from having a clear understanding of their reading targets and next steps.

Writing
■ In writing, the majority of children make satisfactory progress. At early level, the majority of children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to spell familiar words and attempt to write at least one sentence using full stops and capital letters accurately. They write independently during their play. Children now need greater opportunities to write more regularly and for a greater range of purposes in their play. At first level, most children write in a clear and legible

way for a variety of purposes. They use their knowledge of phonics and other strategies to spell familiar and unfamiliar words. Children should now continue to improve their skills in punctuating, ordering and linking sentences. At second level, the majority of children write using different genres. In persuasive writing, most children present relevant ideas and information in a logical way. They use a range of punctuation, sentence openers and use grammar accurately. Children should continue to develop their skills in creating short and extended texts for different purposes. Children at first and second levels would benefit from developing their knowledge of their personal targets and next steps to support improvements in their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics
- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics, and a few make very good progress.

Number, money and measure
- At early level, most children are working confidently with numbers up to 20. They recall number sequences backwards from 20, find missing numbers and solve simple number problems. During free play activities, a few children successfully apply their knowledge of money when counting out the coins for Little Red Riding Hood. Children who have attained first level are confident in carrying out a range of calculations. They are keen to share the strategies which they are using to solve number problems. They are confident at rounding numbers to the nearest 100 and can explain place value identifying the value of different numbers. Children should now further develop their skills in solving two-step problems. At second level, most children are confident at rounding decimal fractions to the nearest whole number and to one decimal place. They confidently identify strategies to determine multiplication and division facts. They explain confidently how to solve simple algebraic equations. Children are less experienced in applying their skills within real-life contexts and the world of work. Across all stages, children would benefit from more opportunities to practise their mental mathematics skills.

Shape, position and movement
- At early level, most children are able to talk about the properties of two-dimensional shapes. At first level, most children can accurately use a range of instruments to measure a variety of objects and record using the correct measurement. Children would benefit from a greater understanding of the different units on measuring tapes. They are confident when describing the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Children talk confidently about their application of this learning for the creation of their Cube Town. At second level, children calculate confidently the area and perimeter of two-dimensional shapes however they were less confident when describing three-dimensional objects. They can describe, plot and record coordinates, correctly using coordinate notation, as well as using these to create a range of two-dimensional symmetrical shapes.

Information handling
- At early level, children confidently match and sort unfamiliar objects. They identify the most and least popular favourite ice-cream flavours from their bar charts and confidently identify how many children liked the different flavours. Overall, across first and second levels, most children are less confident in discussing data analysis. Children working at first and second level need greater experiences of collecting and interpreting data in a range of different ways to develop their understanding of information handling. At second level, children are developing a good understanding of probability.

Attainment over time
- Senior leaders have recently developed approaches to track and monitor children's progress across literacy and numeracy. They are at the early stages of analysing, tracking and

monitoring the performance of specific groups of children, such as by gender and those facing barriers to learning. They are beginning to share this information with teachers, and this is supporting an increasing understanding of whole-school strengths and gaps in learning. Senior leaders and staff need to consider how this information can be used more effectively to meet all children's needs. Senior leaders need to continue to develop approaches to gathering data on children's progress, which illustrates reliably how well children are attaining over time.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff celebrate children's successes through weekly assemblies, displays, online platforms and social media. Achievements out of school are acknowledged and celebrated. Children are building their citizenship skills through their involvement in charity fundraising and community and parish initiatives for example, Eco Schools, Learning About Forests and Laudato Si. Senior leaders are not yet tracking consistently children's participation in wider achievement experiences. This would help identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out. As planned, staff should help children to identify the skills and qualities they develop when participating in activities in and out of school. This will support children to recognise and reflect on their achievements and progress.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders use a range of data and their knowledge of individual children and families to inform a few approaches to equity. They have a plan in place for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This session, PEF has been used to fund a home school practitioner and staff additional hours. Staff are not yet clear about the impact these interventions have on children's attainment and progress. The Leader of Learning recognises the importance of gathering robust evidence to monitor and evaluate the impact such interventions have on children's wellbeing and learning.

- Senior leaders have arrangements in place to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for learning and achievement. They help address the cost of the school day for families in a range of ways, such as providing breakfast boxes for each class or funding residential trips.

Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

Children from across Midlothian attend St Andrew's RC Primary School complex needs provision. They are referred by the Midlothian Education Resource Group. Children remain on the roll of their local school. All children spend the majority of their week within St Andrew's RC Primary School. There are currently ten children across two classes. The classes are divided by age ranges, with children from P5 to P7 in one class, and P1 in the other. A principal teacher manages the provision, with support from learning assistants who are based in the provision. At the time of the inspection there was a vacant post for a full-time teacher.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- All staff working in the provision have a warm and compassionate approach to learning, teaching and care. They encourage children to be confident and independent through their nurturing and responsive interactions. Staff use a wide range of creative teaching approaches, incorporating one-to-one teaching, group work and play-based learning. In group work, staff support children well to improve their talking, listening and social skills. Staff guide discussions effectively, encouraging turn taking and offering increased challenge when necessary. In a few lessons, children are unsettled and find peer-to-peer relationships difficult. Staff manage this skillfully and follow personalised plans to help children to regulate their emotions.

- Staff make good use of digital technology to enhance learning experiences. Pupils in P1 have access to digital tablets. All children above P1 have a laptop issued by the school, which they make good use of. Children enjoy using voice-to-type technology. This is particularly helpful for children who find writing difficult to support them to articulate and record their ideas. It enables children to read over and improve their writing. Staff should now begin to encourage the use of typing to further improve children's use of technology and support their literacy skills.

- Children would benefit from easier access to a safe outdoor space similar to those used across the school. This would help to improve children's independence during play and increase available space for outdoor play and learning.

- The principal teacher plans learning effectively across the curriculum using national guidance. A few children with more complex additional support needs have individual learning plans based on the developmental milestones for early learning. All children have relevant and regularly reviewed personal learning plans. The principal teacher works with children individually to assess learning. This assessment information is used well to plan future levels of support or challenge. Teachers need to record this process more robustly in order to provide reliable evidence to report on children's progress. Teachers now need to identify a wider range of appropriate assessment activities and integrate these into their planning.

- Parents appreciate the detailed pupil progress reports compiled by the principal teacher. These are informative and helpful evaluations of children's progress which report on areas across the curriculum and on progress on personal and social targets.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy from their prior levels of attainment. A few are making good progress, taking into account their individual learning profiles. All children are working at Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels appropriate to their stage of learning. Younger children in the provision are working on the developmental milestones for early learning. The majority of children are working at first and second levels of the CfE for reading, writing, listening and talking and in numeracy and mathematics.

- Children successfully use a range of digital resources to improve their literacy. This includes text with audio books, editing toolbars and other types of assistive communication technology. They accept adult support where appropriate and have the confidence to ask for help where necessary. Children are learning well to collaborate with and learn from others. In numeracy and mathematics, children enjoy number games and are exploring place value through games and practical tasks. A few are making use of robotic hardware to explore position and movement and are able to demonstrate basic knowledge of coordinates on a grid.

- Most children are resilient and make use of the de-escalation strategies which they have discussed with their teachers. Overall, children should have more time for achievement and attainment in areas across the curriculum. For example, there is scope to improve children's participation in the expressive arts and to improve the range of appropriate resources for therapeutic colouring.

- Almost all of the older children are improving their skills to work independently, and the younger children are responding appropriately to encouragement. Younger children are beginning to play independently and will join the larger group for carefully selected time with the wider school. A few children are distracted by the resources offered and can ignore the learning intention as a result. Teachers should select resources carefully which will encourage children to remain engaged and will not detract from the purpose of the lesson.

- Senior leaders should ensure that there is a clear strategy to continue to raise attainment for children in the provision. This should include more robust tracking of skills and attainment through assessment which is integrated in teacher's planning.

- Staff arrange regular trips within the local community and make good use of outside spaces. The trips within the community help to expand children's range of social experiences and improve their confidence. There is scope to improve the use of the outside space within the school to further enhance children's independence. Children from the provision join their mainstream peers for a few carefully selected lessons including physical education, expressive arts and school trips. Most children enjoy this, and they benefit from a more socially diverse experience. As planned, senior leaders should continue to ensure that children from the provision are full participants in the life of the school and the wider community. Teachers from the mainstream classes in the school should work with staff in the provision to plan suitable opportunities for further inclusion.

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.

■ Teachers support regular reading for enjoyment through the effective use of school and class libraries.

■ Senior leaders should ensure that all children receive their entitlement to two hours quality physical education weekly.

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.