Summarised inspection findings

St Andrew's Primary School

Orkney Islands Council

26 August 2025

Key contextual information

St Andrew's Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the village of Toab in Orkney. There are currently 162 children attending the school across seven classes. The headteacher has been in post for two years and is supported by a principal teacher.

Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 8 and 9. Around seven percent of children are in receipt of free school meals. The school reports that almost half of the children who attend the school receive additional support with their learning.

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	

■ The headteacher has worked with staff to evaluate and improve all indoor and outdoor spaces. They have created calm, inclusive and nurturing learning environments for children to learn and play. Children experience a welcoming ethos. They are polite, respectful and supportive of each other. The school's vision 'An Excellent Education for All' underpins the work of the school. Children and adults demonstrate the school values of friendship, teamwork, respect, inclusion, confidence, and kindness in their daily interactions. Children who need help with their wellbeing access appropriate support in 'The Beach', a dedicated space to support children to manage their emotional wellbeing. Children continue to be well supported in class through effective nurturing approaches used by all staff across the school.

■ Almost all children behave well. Staff worked with children to agree that everyone in the school community should be ready, respected and safe. Children created a poster outlining clearly the expectations for behaviour across the school. They included statements describing different behaviours alongside clear statements about the support children can expect from the adults if they display each behaviour. As a result, all members of the school community have a shared understanding of what positive relationships and behaviour should look like. A few children require more targeted support to regulate their emotions and follow school routines. Staff create individual plans for children that set out clearly the strategies to be used if a child requires support. This open and agreed approach to promoting positive behaviour and relationships ensures all children experience consistent responses from all adults in the school.

■ Children share their views with staff through a range of pupil voice groups and well-planned pupil participation activities. They are particularly proud of their active pupil council. Children sought the support of the pupil council to make a successful request for a new trim trail to be installed in the playground next session. They are excited about the new trim trail that will be in place next session as a result of their request. Children are confident that their views and ideas are listened to and acted upon.

- The headteacher has worked well with staff to develop a shared understating of what high-quality learning should look like. Teachers have agreed and clear expectations for learning experiences across the school. These shared expectations are captured in an infographic displayed across the school. The headteacher and staff give each other regular feedback on what is working well and identify areas for further development. This approach has improved the quality and consistency of children's experiences across the school. Teachers' well-considered learning environments and established classroom routines help most children to engage cooperatively with their learning.

- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of lessons effectively with children. In a few lessons, teachers encourage children to identify what success would look like. Most children talk confidently about their learning. Almost all teachers use effective questioning to check children's understanding of their learning. In a few lessons, teachers ask questions to deepen and extend children's thinking. Teachers should build on this positive approach and support children to develop further their understanding of the progress they are making and to identify their next steps in learning.

- Children learn through a range of interesting and relevant contexts with strong links to local culture and heritage. Teachers are developing an 'adaptive teaching' approach. They aim to plan lessons which are responsive to the needs of all children. They have a strong focus on planning open-ended learning that allows children to challenge themselves and extend their learning. As a result, in a majority of lessons, teachers plan learning that meets the needs of most children. At times, planned learning is not yet allowing all children to extend and apply their learning. Teachers should continue to work together to strengthen this approach ensuring all children experience the right level of challenge.

- Teachers are beginning to help children to understand the skills they develop through their learning. They display posters across the school which identify clearly the skills children develop through a range of learning activities. A few teachers make relevant links to skills during lessons. Most children are beginning to make connections between their learning in school and skills for life and work. Teachers should continue to embed the language of skills in all lessons. This will help children to deepen their understanding of how their learning in school contributes to their development beyond the classroom.

- Teachers use technology well to enhance and enrich children's learning experiences. Children in primary 7 have access to an individual device. Children at other stages access laptop and tablet computers. Children speak positively about the impact access to technology is having on their learning. Children take photographs and videos of their work to upload onto an online platform. They take part in an online reading programme that tracks their reading skills and the number of books that they have read. Children develop skills in coding and use online applications to revisit and consolidate their learning in literacy and numeracy. Children who require additional support with their learning use a range of technology to overcome potential barriers to learning. Teachers now need to develop children's skills in the use of technologies in a progressive way. This will develop further children's digital literacy skills.

- Staff at early level provide well-planned and well-resourced opportunities for children to learn through a play-based approach. Teachers have developed effective responsive planning that supports well an appropriate balance of adult-directed, adult-initiated and child-initiated learning. Children confidently lead their own learning. They talk about what they need to do to be successful learners. Staff make effective use of spaces to provide stimulating learning both indoors and in the outdoor area. Children are confident and creative as they use critical thinking skills to problem solve independently.

■ Teachers plan over different timescales using local authority and school progression frameworks for all areas of the curriculum. They have recently developed school progression pathways to support the teaching of writing. Teachers speak positively about the impact of this on planning learning in writing that meets the needs of all children. Teachers should build on this positive start and develop further approaches to planning with a focus on numeracy and mathematics.

■ In most lessons, children evaluate their own work and the work of others. Most teachers provide children with helpful verbal feedback highlighting clearly where children are being successful. Teachers should build on this to ensure children are provided with clear written feedback on how to improve.

■ Teachers take part in helpful moderation activities in school and with other schools in the area. This is has supported well their understanding of national standards and informed work to develop approaches to assessing children's progress. Teachers use an increasing range of summative and ongoing assessment approaches well. As a result, teachers are more confident and accurate when making professional judgements on children's progress and attainment. The headteacher is now working with staff to develop high-quality assessments to evidence children's application of their learning across the curriculum. This will further support teachers to make robust judgements about children's progress.

■ The headteacher has supported staff well to use the local authority tracking tool to record if children require support, are on track or are exceeding expectations. She meets with teachers four times each year to discuss children's learning and progress. The headteacher provides teachers with reflective questions based on the data to support discussion about children's progress in learning and to identify possible supports. Through this thorough approach, teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at using tracking information to inform planning for next steps and identifying appropriate support for children who may have gaps in their learning.

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 headteacher has taken significant steps to ensure that data about children's progress and attainment is accurate. All staff have engaged in professional learning in school and with colleagues in other schools to develop a sound understanding of national standards in literacy and numeracy.

■ Overall, most children achieve Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) national standards in literacy and numeracy. A few children at each stage exceed CfE national expectations. Children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards their individual targets. Across the school, a few children are capable of achieving more.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Children at early level make very good progress in literacy and English. Children at first and second level make good progress in literacy and English. Across all stages, a whole school approach to improving writing has had a positive impact on children's progress and attainment.

Listening and talking
■ At early level, almost all children listen well to the adults in class. They listen very well to each other during play and group tasks. Almost all children take turns when talking to each other. At first and second levels, most children listen well in class. They work well in small groups and encourage each other to join in discussions and to share ideas and opinions. At second level, children enjoy creating presentations about topics they are interested in and sharing facts about it with their class. Children at second level use simple non-verbal cues such as nodding and pausing during group discussions to indicate their agreement or signal that they would like to contribute. Children are ready to build on this and develop further their skill in debating and persuading.

Reading
■ At early level, almost all children use their phonics knowledge to sound out words. They recognise tricky words from their reading book. Almost all children, retell familiar stories during play using a range of resources to help sequence events. At first level, most children name their favourite author and are developing an understanding of the types of books they like to read for pleasure. Most children summarise well the main ideas from a text that they have read. They make accurate predictions about future events in their class novel and reading books. At second level, most children answer increasingly challenging questions about the books they are reading. Children in P7 recognise and respond to inferential and evaluative questions using evidence from their texts. Children across the school make effective use of the school library. They access non-fiction texts to support their learning about living things and biodiversity. Across all stages, a few children are capable of achieving more. They are ready to

access increasingly challenging texts, including digital texts, and to explore further author styles and techniques.

Writing

- At early level, almost all children retell familiar stories. They use pictures to sequence fairytales and attempt to write their own texts. Almost all children form letters correctly. They use their knowledge of sounds to write tricky words. Almost all children write sentences independently. They punctuate sentences correctly using full stops and capital letters. At first level, children write for an increasing range of purposes. Most children use interesting vocabulary to describe characters and settings in their stories. They use an increasing range of punctuation, including exclamation marks and speech marks, to make their writing interesting. At second level, most children write at length. They organise their writing using paragraphs and use strategies such as rhetorical questions to capture the readers' interest. Most children are beginning to use synonyms to improve their writing and make it more descriptive. Across the school, children apply their writing skills well across their learning. Children create fact files about plants and create information leaflets linked to their science work. Across the school, few children require support to improve their presentation skills and to read over their work to check their spelling and punctuation.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Children across the school make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children recognise numbers in their environment. They add and subtract confidently within 10. Almost all children identify the number before or after a given number. They describe and compare accurately objects using language such as taller, shorter, longer and heavier. At first level most children confidently add and subtract three-digit numbers. They are gaining confidence in answering multiplication and division calculations. Most children use standard units to measure the length and weight of familiar objects. Most children recognise and work with simple fractions. At second level, most children add and subtract decimals. They are confident finding the fraction of a given amount. Most children order negative numbers on a number line. Across the school, most children rely on written methods to solve problems. They now need to extend their understanding of the range of strategies that they use to solve problems. They need to develop skill and confidence in selecting strategies and explaining their thinking.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and describe simple two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They use simple vocabulary to describe shapes. At first and second levels, children recognise an increasing range of 2D shapes and three-dimensional objects. A few children need support to use the correct mathematical vocabulary to describe their properties. At first and second levels, most children confidently name a range of angles using terms such as acute, right, obtuse and straight. At second level, most children use their knowledge of complementary and supplementary angles to solve problems.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children create pictographs to display data about favourite fruits. They sort items during play setting their own criteria. At first level, children gather data and display it on bar graphs. At second level, most children recognise a wide range of ways to display data. They answer simple questions from a range of graphs and charts making comparisons. At second level, children are ready to develop their skills in analysing data and discussing the reliability and validity of data.

Attainment over time

- Overall, attendance is in line with the national average. Currently, children's attendance across the school is just below the school target of 95%. A few children have an attendance rate of less than 90%. A few children have an attendance rate of less than 70%. The headteacher monitors closely children's attendance. In addition to monthly attendance monitoring, she includes attendance as a standing item at attainment tracking meetings. Teachers identify the impact of poor attendance on children's progress and take appropriate steps to help address any gaps that arise. The headteacher engages appropriately with families where attendance is a concern, providing sensitive support. As a result, attendance has improved for most children. There are no children on part-time timetables.

- The headteacher identified rightly that attainment data was unreliable before her appointment at the start of session 2023/24. She developed quickly a robust system to track children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Positively, she is building on this and is beginning to track children's progress across the curriculum. The headteacher worked with staff to improve their understanding of national standards and the quality of evidence used to make judgements about children's attainment. As a result, all staff now have a clearer understanding of where gaps exist for individual children. The headteacher works effectively with staff to identify and provide appropriate and timely support and interventions to ensure all children make appropriate progress in their learning. Overall, children's attainment is maintained or improved.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The headteacher tracks children's participation in clubs, activities and experiences within and beyond the classroom. This ensures no child misses out on experiencing success. The headteacher is at the early stages of tracking the skills and attributes children develop through their participation.

- Children across the school participate in a range of learning across the curriculum that helps them to develop as responsible and valued members of their community. They demonstrated high levels of creative and artistic skills in pieces of art they created and displayed at a recent community art exhibition. Older children achieved great success in their performance of 'Pirates of the Currybean'. They showcased their performance skills and worked together to create scenery and props for the performance. All children develop strong music skills through the curriculum with a majority of children P4-P7 are learning to play an instrument. They contribute effectively during school and community events and participate successfully in competitions.

- All children learn and develop a range of important skills through their participation in 'Friday Activities'. These activities are linked closely to the history and heritage of the local area, for example, knitting, crochet and needlework. Children articulate clearly the benefit of their participation and are rightly proud of their role in continuing important traditions.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a sound understanding of the socio-economic challenges families in their community may face. In particular, they are aware of the factors that impact island and rural communities. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to fund additional hours for staff who provide targeted support for identified groups and individuals. This additional time is used to plan and facilitate targeted support for identified children with a clear focus on narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. The headteacher provides sensitive support to families when they require it. As a result, families feel well supported by the school. Children who access additional supports through PEF are making good progress with their learning. As

planned, the headteacher should continue to use PEF to accelerate progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Other relevant evidence

■ All children access their entitlement to two hours of quality physical education (PE) each week. They work with a PE specialist for one of their lessons. They develop important skills in a range of sports. Children are enjoying the current focus on athletics. They will use their skills to participate in events at the Island Games.

■ All children access their entitlement through the 1+2 languages approach. All children learn French through a well-planned progressive programme. All children learn British Sign Language. They enjoy building on their learning as they move through the school.

■ All children experience a progressive programme of Religious and Moral Education. They learn about Christianity and other world religions. Younger children learn about stories that are important to people from a range of religious backgrounds. Older children learn about festivals celebrated by people of different faiths and make comparisons to find similarities and differences.

■ The headteacher shares her plans for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) through her school improvement plan. She should now involve parents and staff more fully in planning for the use of PEF.

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.