

Summarised inspection findings

Saracen Primary School

Glasgow City Council

23 May 2023

Key contextual information

Saracen Primary School is situated in the Possilpark area of Glasgow, north of the city centre. The school is situated on a shared campus. The roll of the school at the time of inspection is 201. Eighty-nine percent of children reside in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas (SIMD) one and two. The headteacher has been in post for a year and a half. She is supported by a deputy headteacher and three principal teachers. Attendance is generally below the national average. Improving attendance is currently a priority for senior leaders. In the past two years, there have been no exclusions. In the current session, the pupil equity fund (PEF) allocated to the school, is £209,475. Staffing levels in the past five years have been stable. In February 2022, 87% of P1-P7 pupils were registered for free school meals, of whom 83% accessed this. Around 28% of children use a language other than English at home. Progress and attainment of children has been impacted significantly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

- The school historically has had at its core, five values of honesty, commitment, friendship, respect and achievement. In order to streamline and embed consistent messages that reflect values for staff, children and families, senior leaders have developed three 'consistencies' of 'ready', 'respectful' and 'team.' The three consistencies are visible and referred to in every classroom by all children and staff. They are demonstrated clearly in all interactions between children and staff. They also support positive relationships across the school and sustain children's engagement in their learning. The school has been working well to develop staff and children's awareness of the United Nations Charter of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles. As a result, the school is now in a position to apply for the UNCRC bronze standard. They have already begun to work towards the silver standard. This creates a calm, purposeful learning environment across the school.
- Almost all children participate actively in their learning activities. The school has recently been allocated English as an Additional Language (EAL) staff who are quickly helping to enhance the progress and outcomes of a large proportion of children arriving to the school who have English as an additional language. Teachers in almost all classes are developing very effective ways of checking children's understanding, as learning progresses. For example, most teachers regularly refer back to success criteria set out at the start of the lesson, to check how well children are progressing and understanding the context. Alongside this, in most lessons, teachers have developed highly skilled questioning techniques which are applied consistently. This is helping to develop children's curiosity as learners and is also sustaining motivation in their learning.
- Most teachers use digital technology creatively to enhance children's learning experiences. At times, this is hampered by connectivity issues. In the most effective examples, a minority of

teachers use digital technologies very creatively to inspire skills of research and enquiry in children. There is further scope to share and embed the examples of highly creative practice using digital technology in children's learning, across all classes.

- Children at the early stages have regular opportunities to engage in a range of play-based activities within their classroom environment. Informed by observation and assessment, staff recognised that a significant number of children benefited most from a more structured approach to learning and tailored their approach to play accordingly. As children progress in their learning, staff should continue to review their play provision to ensure it provides rich learning experiences. This will support the further development of the play environment and the range of experiences provided at the early stages.
- Senior leaders and teachers have created a number of successful ways for children to contribute to the wider life of the school and share their views to shape school improvement. For example, through the 'junior leadership team' and the wide range of pupil committees. Children at all stages talk confidently about how their views have shaped recent, specific examples of whole-school improvement. This is a strength of the school's work to engage children in ongoing self-evaluation in well-planned, meaningful ways.
- Almost all teachers plan highly-structured learning consistently to maximise children's engagement and progress in their learning experiences in almost all classes. Almost all teachers are very successful in sustaining children's high levels of motivation and involvement in lessons through well-planned and well-supported activities. Almost all teachers maximise the use of learning spaces effectively to encourage collaborative learning between children. In almost all lessons, children experience appropriate challenge and support in their learning. Almost all teachers differentiate learning activities and assessment to support and challenge children in their learning. Children show pride and enthusiasm for their learning environments. Displays showing regularly updated examples of children's work and more widely, showing examples of children leading learning and learner voice, enhance the learning environment.
- In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions are clear and are underpinned using highly structured, clear approaches to framing the purpose of learning. In most classes, children regularly co-create the purposes of what they are learning. These purposes and success criteria are used at regular intervals throughout almost all lessons to check children's understanding of the learning. Most children are very aware of the purpose of what they are learning and are involved in co-creating targets and next steps in their learning. This is stronger across literacy and numeracy, using 'traffic lights' approaches to feedback and next steps. Teachers should continue to develop children's awareness of what they need to do to improve across all curriculum areas. This will also help children to make connections in areas of strength and areas to improve, across their learning. In a minority of classes, children are very clear about the skills they are developing, often directly related to aspects of the world of work. This is an area of emerging strength that should be shared and embedded more widely across all classes.
- Almost all teachers show high levels of skill in using a variety of assessment approaches to allow children to demonstrate progress. Senior leaders and teachers have developed highly robust systems which are allowing them to evidence children's progress and engagement in wider achievement activities. Approaches to all aspects of moderation are robust. Staff have a very good understanding of the role and purpose of moderation, which in turn is developing their confidence in applying national standards accurately to map children's progress and next steps. Staff have recently shared good practice around moderation and applying national standards more widely in order to improve other school's approaches to this. SLT and teachers track children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy using reliable assessment evidence. Children's progress is tracked robustly at key milestones and also at every stage.

This is backed up by teachers' robust professional judgement. As a next step, SLT and teachers should plan to assess children's progress in all curriculum areas.

- Senior leaders have developed outstanding approaches to identifying targeted actions for individual children in each class. There is very clear interconnectedness between their 'fact, story, action' approach and stage and whole-school monitoring and tracking. This is ensuring that the needs of children who may be at risk of not achieving are being continuously reviewed and appropriate interventions are applied and monitored regularly. This is a clear strength of the school's work to support all children to improve 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

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school is good.
- Predicted levels of attainment indicate accurately that the majority of children at all stages are on track to achieve expected national levels in literacy and numeracy. A minority of children are achieving beyond expected levels.
- Teachers demonstrate high levels of confidence and accuracy in assessing children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels due to the highly effective and robust approach to moderation in place.
- Senior leaders and staff monitor very closely the progress and attainment of different groups of children who have additional support needs. This indicates that almost all children receiving targeted interventions are making good progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- At early level, the majority of children make an attempt to take turns when listening and talking in a range of contexts. At first level, most children apply verbal and non-verbal techniques, such as eye contact and body language, when communicating. At second level, most children can design and deliver a presentation to promote a game they have created. They contribute appropriately to group discussions or when working collaboratively. Across the school, children are most confident when speaking with their peers. Staff have rightly identified the need to develop listening and talking skills further, to build children's confidence in speaking to an audience.

Reading

- At early level, most children engage well when listening to stories. They enjoy contributing to storytelling through actions. Children show an awareness of the features of books, such as title, spine and blurb. Staff have correctly identified the need to develop children's understanding and awareness of rhyme. At first level, the majority of children find key information from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including digital texts. They use the contents page, index and headings to help locate information. The majority of children make appropriate notes under given headings to organise information they gather. Children should continue to develop their fluency, understanding and expression when reading. At second level, most children apply a range of skills and strategies to read and understand texts. Most children explain their preference for specific types of texts confidently and their reason for

this preference. Teachers should continue to encourage children to experience a wider variety of texts.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children share their feelings, experiences and ideas in pictures and print. The majority of children use a pencil with increasing control. Children should strengthen further their ability to form letters correctly. At first level, the majority of children apply their knowledge of spelling patterns, rules and strategies to spell most words correctly. They create texts regularly for a range of purposes. At second level, the majority of children write for a range of purposes and audiences. They organise ideas and information in a logical order when recording science experiments, using appropriate technical language. At first and second levels, children should continue to develop their ability to create texts digitally.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good.

Number, money and measure

- Across all stages, the majority of children are confident in the use of basic number processes. They articulate strategies for addition and subtraction with growing confidence. At early level, the majority of children identify accurately the number before and after in a sequence within 20. They need further practice to read analogue and digital hourly time. At first and second level, the majority of children are confident in their use of multiplication tables appropriate to their age and stage. The majority of children apply the correct order of operations in number calculations when solving multi-step problems. The majority of children are confident in the use of decimals, fractions and percentages. At second level, children are not yet confident in making the link between speed, distance and time to carry out related calculations for planned journeys.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children name, identify and classify a range of simple two-dimensional shapes. They are less confident identifying three-dimensional objects. At first and second levels, most children identify the properties of an increasing range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects confidently. At first level, children identify right angles accurately and can identify and create images with one line of symmetry. At second level, the majority of children use mathematical language appropriately to classify acute, obtuse, straight and reflex angles. Children at all stages should develop further their application of knowledge and skills in real-life contexts.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children are beginning to develop their understanding of organising and sorting objects in a variety of ways. They should continue to develop their understanding and use of charts, graphs and signs. At first level, the majority of children capture data from real-life situations using tally marks. At second level, the majority of children confidently identify ways to display data for different purposes, using digital technology. Children at first and second level should continue to develop their ability to determine the reliability of data.

Attainment over time

- Over the past eighteen months, the headteacher has strengthened the systems and processes for tracking children's attainment over time considerably. Staff capture and track children's progress across every year group.

- Children's attainment was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Through planned, targeted support, children at P4 now exceed or match pre-COVID P4 levels of attainment across literacy and numeracy. Children at P7 have experienced year-on-year strong improvement since the pandemic across literacy and numeracy.
- Tracking of cohorts of children over the past two years shows sustained progress and an upward trend in attainment. Current predicted levels of attainment clearly demonstrate the significant impact strategies to raise attainment are having on improving outcomes for children across the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- The introduction of a robust achievement tracker enables staff to monitor closely the range of experiences children receive at class and individual level. Staff are also beginning to build the associated skills that children are developing through wider achievement experiences into this tracking system. Staff use this effectively to capture children's achievements in and out of school. Staff ensure that wider opportunities for achievement are planned into the curriculum, including excursions, specialist teaching and engaging with visitors. In addition, staff monitor closely the achievements of specific groups of children, such as those who are care experienced. Staff successfully access additional funding to ensure that children who are care experienced do not miss out. Including skills development within the tracker would further strengthen its effectiveness.
- Staff recognise and celebrate individual children's achievements at assemblies, through 'hot chocolate Fridays,' in newsletters and on social media. Family members are invited to share their child's achievement through termly 'soft finishes'. Children speak positively about the confidence and skills they are gaining through their involvement in junior leadership teams. They recognise how their work as a digital leader, or their membership in the equality group or reading squad is helping improve the work of the school. Effective partnership working supports the school to provide a range of wider experiences for children, such as sailing. These activities support children to develop key life skills.

Equity for all learners

- All staff demonstrate a very strong understanding of equity. They work together well to build positive relationships and ensure children experience an inclusive, nurturing learning environment. The staff team has a strong, shared understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community. They use this knowledge effectively to improve outcomes for all children. Staff take care to remove costs associated with the school day. For example, all P7 have access to a fully funded residential experience and families have access to a free school clothing bank.
- The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) Committee use PEF effectively to reduce potential barriers to learning arising from children's socio-economic background. Curriculum experiences are enhanced through the provision of specialist music and art provision. Additional staff provide specialist support for children for whom English is not their home language. The funding of enhanced staffing ensures that every class benefits from a dedicated support for learning assistant. Support for Learning Workers provide effective, targeted individual and group support to address identified gaps in learning. Staff monitor the impact of these interventions very effectively. As a result, the positive impact on outcomes for children from the range of interventions in place is evident. The relentless focus of the headteacher to ensure equity is an 'enabler' in the school. This is driving children's enthusiasm for their learning and maintaining the strong participation levels in wider achievement activities.

Other relevant evidence

Monitoring for improved outcomes

- Senior leaders and teachers have developed outstanding approaches to identifying targeted interventions for individual children in each class. Senior leaders and teachers very effectively ensure a relentless focus on identifying gaps in learning and addressing them through a structured, strategic approach. For example, most recently, one of the whole-school identified gaps is in vocabulary. This is being developed through new approaches to teaching reading and writing, as well as other bespoke approaches for individual children. The impact of these interventions is robustly monitored. The 'Fact, Story, Action' dialogue approach is designed to frame regular professional discussion to monitor the progress and effectiveness of interventions for targeted groups of children. This supports the regular professional dialogue to monitor targeted groups of children's progress and also supports very effectively the robust tracking dialogues at senior leader and stage levels. This is having a very positive impact on children's attainment and achievement. As a result, improvement in children's attainment and achievement is very strong. There is a very clear interconnectedness between the 'fact, story, action' approach and stage and whole-school monitoring and tracking. This is ensuring that the needs of children who may be at risk of not achieving are being continuously monitored and reviewed.

Equity

- At Saracen primary school, equity is seen as the key enabler to the inclusive approaches to engaging children and families in the work of the school. Almost all children and families benefit from a culture of creative approaches to equity. For example, strong engagement with groups of local partners is providing almost all children with rich learning experiences beyond the school. Senior leaders have forged positive connections very well in the wider community to connect parents and carers to the support they need to mitigate against challenging socio-economic circumstances.
- PEF and school partners' involvement is maximised successfully to provide regular, varied opportunities for every child to engage in rich learning away from the classroom. These experiences are then applied to enhance learning, particularly in literacy this session. PEF is used effectively to enhance staffing, with all additional support for learning workers (SfLWs) trained in targeted interventions. SfLWs are deployed at each stage to work in targeted and universal ways with children. Importantly, they are becoming much more involved with class teachers in monitoring children's progress and reviewing their targets. They work in well planned ways with class teachers to support children to engage well in their learning.

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.