

# Summarised inspection findings

**Leenvale Primary School**

West Dunbartonshire Council

19 December 2023

## Key contextual information

Levensvale Primary school is a non-denominational school in Alexandria serving the catchment areas of Tullichewan, Rosshead and Drumkinnon Gate West Dunbartonshire. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 183 set across seven classes. In the last few years, the school has had significant changes in leadership. The newly appointed headteacher (HT) took up the post in August 2023. Prior to this appointment, the current deputy head teacher (DHT) was in the role of acting head teacher for 11 months. The HT and DHT have been working as a newly formed leadership team since August 2023.

Forty three percent of pupils are free school meal entitled and reside in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one and two. 87% of pupils reside in SIMD deciles one to five. 59% per cent of learners have additional support needs or require more help to make progress in their learning. Overall, school attendance is in line with the national average, and there have been no exclusions since 2019.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Staff understand the social, economic and cultural context of the school well. They use this knowledge effectively to inform important aspects of the school's work. Following the Pandemic, the deputy head teacher, in her acting headteacher role, worked effectively with stakeholders to refresh the school's vision, values and aim to ensure to better reflect the school's context. The school's values of Successful, Healthy, Inclusive, Nurturing and Engaged (SHINE) are now established and demonstrated well through the quality of relationships across the school. The newly appointed head teacher, with the support of the depute, have established a clear understanding of the school's context. Senior leaders and staff work well together to build a collegiate campus. This can support all children across the nursery and school to aspire to achieve the vision to 'play, learn and grow to be our best'.
- The newly appointed headteacher is beginning to provide strategic leadership and direction to the school. Despite her short time in post, the head teacher is beginning to have a positive impact in shaping and directing areas of school improvement. She is establishing an accurate understanding of the development needs of the school and is beginning to take appropriate actions. This is resulting in more effective working relationship with staff, children and parents.
- Senior leaders are beginning to focus on reviewing the systems and processes used to monitor and review the quality of learning and teaching. They have taken forward collegiate observations of learning and have begun to identify next steps in this important area of the school's work. The headteacher has been responsive to staff's views and, as a result, is reviewing and streamlining planning frameworks. Newly refreshed 'Raising Attainment in Learning' (RAIL) meetings are beginning to support teachers to discuss approaches to learning and teaching more effectively, and to identify gaps in children's learning. This is supporting

more robust monitoring of children's progress and attainment. Senior leaders should build on this positive start to ensure that these processes lead to improved outcomes for all children.

- Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to ensure a more coherent approach to self-evaluation. Collegiate calendars and quality assurance activities need to prioritise time across the school year to allow all staff to engage more effectively in self-evaluation activities. This will support staff's ability to engage with self-evaluation frameworks 'How good is our school? 4th edition' (HGIOS4) and 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' (HGIOELC).
- Senior leaders should take a more cohesive approach to school improvement and ensure data is used to inform school improvement, encouraging a high level of staff leadership of change and improvement.
- Across the school, teachers are committed to improving outcomes for learners and engage well in opportunities to work collegiately. Teachers benefit from annual professional development meetings to discuss their professional learning needs and have regular opportunities to attend relevant professional learning. The headteacher is keen to develop leadership at all levels across the school. Newly appointed leadership champions are at the early stages of establishing a baseline for improvement in key areas of assessment and moderation, data, health and wellbeing, literacy, and numeracy. The headteacher is aware of the need to ensure that the pace of change is appropriate and manageable and that carefully prioritised action is taken. As approaches to self-evaluation continue to develop and embed, it is important that the headteacher ensures regular monitoring of the progress and impact of improvement initiatives.
- Across the school, children have a small number of opportunities to participate regularly in activities in which they can contribute to school improvement or develop their leadership skills. Most children could articulate times when their opinions were sought and acted upon and could name a few experiences where they participated in leadership activities, however, these were often short-term initiatives. As a next step, senior leaders should develop relevant and meaningful and more sustainable ways for children to be more involved in self-evaluation activities which include reflecting on their learning experiences.
- The school has an active Parent Council who work well alongside the staff and learners. The majority of activities focus on raising funds and holding events. Parents who spoke to inspectors were keen for the leadership team to develop further opportunities for parents to share their views and inform future development priorities. Senior leaders are actively re-establish community partnership links impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The school's 'Pupil Equity Funding' plan details an appropriate range of targeted and universal interventions to support raising the attainment of children's literacy, numeracy, and well-being. Senior leaders now need to use data more effectively to track closely the progress made by individual children. More strategic planning will outline more clearly the outcomes to be achieved and how the impact of closing the poverty-related attainment gap will be measured.

## 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 senior leadership team and staff have created a very nurturing and supportive ethos across the school. There is a calm climate for learning. Children benefit from the positive relationships they have with each other and staff. They are very polite and respectful and are proud of their school. Overall, almost all children are eager to learn, and most engage well in their learning. When staff match the learning well to the needs of the children, almost all are motivated and work well independently and collaboratively. At times, the pace of learning could be brisker. Children respond well to the opportunities they have to work independently and in pairs and groups, for example, as part of their literacy and numeracy activities. They would benefit from greater opportunities for personalisation and choice in their learning.
- Staff have created very attractive and well-resourced classrooms and learning hubs. Children report that they enjoy learning particularly in the cookery area. It is important that staff continue to develop further the use of dedicated learning hubs for use during school day. This can engage all learners more effectively. Staff have developed a well-resourced library area which children in the infant department use well. Children report that they can choose from a wide range of books. Across the school, children make good use of their class libraries. They are also able to access a mobile library regularly throughout the year. Staff use displays well to demonstrate children's learning journeys and celebrate their achievements. They display examples of children's writing throughout the school.
- In most lessons, teachers structure lessons well. As a result, children are motivated and engaged in learning. In most classes, explanations and instructions are clear. In most lessons, staff share the purpose of learning and the ways in which children can be successful. In a few classes, teachers refer to success criteria regularly to encourage and support children as they undertake activities. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding. Children are becoming more familiar with their specific targets in writing as part of the newly developed writing rubrics. Staff should continue to support children to have a greater understanding of their own specific targets across literacy and numeracy. This will enable them to reflect on their own progress and identify what they need to improve. Staff use plenary sessions effectively to check children's understanding and make links to what children are learning.
- In the majority of lessons, children use digital technology well to support their learning. They make use of laptops for research and to reinforce learning. Children who require additional support benefit from using digital technologies to support their learning. There is potential to develop children's digital skills more consistently across the school.
- Over the last few years, staff across the early level have been developing interesting and stimulating play based approaches to learning. Children respond well to the opportunities they have to be independent and lead their own learning and interactions between adults and children during play experiences are positive and responsive. A few children make good

use of play contexts including role play and construction to develop their writing and problem solving skills. An early years education officer works alongside class teachers in the P1 class to support and extend children's learning. She collaborates well with staff to plan and develop learning opportunities. Children from the nursery class join children in the P1 class for positive shared learning experiences.

- Staff use an established assessment calendar to plan a range of summative and standardised assessments. They use a range of data to make judgements about children's progress and plan future learning. They gather samples of children's work throughout the year to help inform decisions about children's progress. Staff are working together to develop a shared understanding of standards in writing. They should continue, as planned, to develop this further across other areas of learning. It would also be helpful for staff to undertake moderation discussions with colleagues beyond the school. This would support a shared understanding of achievement of a level. The majority of teachers provide helpful oral and written feedback to children to support them to make progress. There is scope to develop this further to ensure all staff make use of an agreed approach. It would also be helpful for children across the school to engage more regularly in self and peer assessment.
- Senior leaders has recently developed an online planning and tracking tool to support breadth and coverage more effectively for all curriculum areas. Teachers use local authority progression pathways in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics to support planning. They should now broaden this to all curriculum areas to ensure all children experience a progressive curriculum.
- Teachers gather a range of data to help them to monitor and track individual children's progress. Senior leaders are becoming more familiar with the local authority monitoring and tracking tool. The staff should continue to develop and streamline their approaches to tracking and monitoring so that the progress of all individuals and groups of children including those with require additional support in their learning or have additional support needs is clearer. Teachers plan several interventions and should evaluate the impact of these regularly to ensure all children make the best possible progress. Senior leaders should support teachers to develop how they assess, track and monitor children's progress across all curricular areas.
- Senior leaders and teachers have RAIL meetings to review the progress all children are making. These professional discussions have improved teacher engagement with data. This is resulting in informing teacher planning and providing an improved knowledge of children's attainment. Senior leaders should support teachers to further develop their data literacy skills.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Levensale Primary School curriculum rationale was developed in partnership with all stakeholders and is underpinned by the school vision, values and aims. The curriculum has a focus on developing literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and employability skills. Progression pathways are used well for literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. The school have recently introduced a health and wellbeing progression pathway and should now look to develop these across all areas of the curriculum. These pathways should meet children's needs, build on their prior learning and abilities, and link to assessment procedures and the National Benchmarks. This will ensure that teachers are providing a progressive curriculum across the broad general education.
- Staff now need to review how interdisciplinary learning is planned across the school. Teachers should revisit Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) guidance to ensure children have the opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge to ensure depth of learning.
- The school is in the early stages of developing a whole school approach to outdoor learning. As planned, staff should develop a progressive outdoor learning programme to maximise the potential of the local area and enhance children's experiences.
- Across the school, senior leaders should ensure that all children are receiving their entitlement to 1+2 Languages and receive regular religious and moral education that allows for progression.
- Teachers provide opportunities for children to develop their digital skills through the use of laptops and programmable toys. As planned, the school should develop a progressive programme for learning in digital technologies.
- The school provides children with regular and important opportunities to participate in healthy physical activities. Senior leaders should review timetables to ensure all children receive two hours of quality Physical Education each week.
- The school have previously established positive partnerships with the local community prior to the pandemic, for example, Balquhiddy Care Home. As planned, they should revive and create new partnerships to enhance their curriculum offer.
- There is a well-planned transition programme in place both from early years into P1, and P7 to Vale of Leven Academy. Effective enhanced transition arrangements are in place for those children requiring extra support.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents agree that the school has a positive and welcoming ethos where trusting and nurturing relationships are well established between staff, children and their families. Parents spoke positively about the effective support their children receive from the school and appreciate the sensitive manner in which staff help with the wellbeing of families. Opportunities such as the 'pop choir' are allowing parents to positively engage with the school and is helping to build parents confidence and sense of wellbeing. As a result, almost all parents say they are confident to approach the senior leaders and staff should they have any queries or concerns.
- Parents welcome the levels of support that the school has provided, including signposting to support services through 'Wellbeing Wednesday' sessions in partnership with the school's nursery and engaging with partners to support families beyond school in the communities. Parents, building on this important work, would like to see more established and regular events, including, in particular, more information about what their child is learning and the progress they are making. The newly introduced learning journals have the potential to support parents in better understanding their child as a learner.
- The Parent Council work well alongside the school to organise events and help raise funds to support the work of the school. The Parents Council would welcome increased opportunities to share their views on school improvement. The Parent Council are aware of the school's plan for Pupil Equity finding (PEF) and would welcome further opportunities to influence this area of the school's work.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.



This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- There is a strong sense of community across the school. The wellbeing of children and their families sits at the heart of the school's work. Staff know the children very well. Staff and children demonstrate positive and nurturing relationships, which helps children feel valued, safe and included. Children can talk about how staff support them to respect and value other. They form friendships and show kindness toward each other, resulting in an inclusive, welcoming, happy atmosphere across the school.
- Supporting the wellbeing needs of children and their families is a strength in the school. Senior leaders and staff recognise the importance of providing all children with the knowledge and skills to understand their own wellbeing. Children have regular opportunities to learn about various aspects of health and wellbeing. Younger children are developing their ability to talk about their skills and attributes and how they can use them in real-life contexts. This is helping them to develop a sense of pride. Older children can identify and talk about feelings and emotions and how they can change in response to events and situations, which leads to developing their resilience.
- All classes have a class charter displayed prominently in the classroom to help children understand the school values. Children can articulate their thoughts and express their emotions with growing confidence. Teachers should continue to promote the language of wellbeing and rights using the national wellbeing indicators and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This will allow children to use the language of wellbeing to reflect consistently on their own wellbeing. They should also develop approaches to tracking children's health and wellbeing over time to ensure that all children continue to build on their skills. This will better allow them to advocate for themselves and develop further their thoughts, views and feelings as they grow and develop.
- Teachers should continue to review the experience all children have in health and wellbeing to ensure that all children continue to build on their skills. This will better allow them to advocate for themselves and develop further their thoughts, views and feelings as they grow and develop.
- Children have regular opportunities to play outdoors during break and lunch times. Children play well together and enjoy the vast and differing outdoor spaces in the school's extensive grounds. Across the outdoor play spaces, staff should work now to improve the limited range of play materials available for children. Staff and sports partners are at the early stages of training a few older children in the school to take on the role as play leaders. This has the potential to provide children with more relevant and meaningful play opportunities with peers. Senior leaders should continue to develop opportunities for children to participate more fully in the life of the school.

- All staff receive regular child protection training and understand and apply the statutory requirements and codes of practice. Staff support well the needs of children who require additional support in their learning. A range of plans including Local Authority Staged Intervention plans, Individual Education plans and Childs plans supports senior leaders to recognise and plan to meet individual's needs. All plans are regularly reviewed, and appropriate learning targets are in place to reduce barriers and raise attainment. Targets are shared with parents through discussions. As a next step, Senior leaders should consider streamlining the number of plans children have and document more clearly any child who meets the criteria for a coordinated support plan. Decisions taken in relation to co-ordinated support plans should be more explicitly noted during team around the child meetings. As planned senior leaders and staff should include parents and children more in deciding and evaluating the effectiveness of plans and targets to maximize the progress made by children.
- Attendance across the school is in line with the national average; however, the attendance of a few children is significantly lower than the national average. Senior leaders have increased their monitoring of attendance to identify patterns of individuals and cohorts and are taking effective action to address concerns.
- The school is held in high regard by the local community and its partners for its approaches to the support it provides children and their families. Staff work effectively with a range of wellbeing projects and partners to support children and their families. A range of effective projects, such as 'Wellbeing Wednesdays', intergenerational projects, and the family pop choir, are helping children and families to develop relationships in the community. As a result, children are beginning to notice the influence they can have in using their skills and attributes positively in the community.
- At key times, transitions between year groups are well planned, and enhanced support is available for children and families to support them to feel confident and settle quickly. Across the school, transitions within and between lessons need to be reviewed to ensure that all children feel settled and are working in familiar areas that offer the correct level of support to their stages of learning to maximise their independence. Current class setting arrangements and cross level working are not meeting the needs of a minority of children well enough.
- Across the year, Children learn about different cultures and religions through recognising the festivals and celebrations of Christianity and other world religions. Older children participated in the annual 'Festival of Thought' project-based learning events. This involved children researching and presenting on real world events and global issues. Children spoke positively about the importance of having these opportunities. They could articulate well their views on various topics, such as mental health, gender identity, natural disasters and war. As a result, children develop important knowledge and skills that, challenge their thinking, build tolerance and challenge discrimination. Teachers should develop this important area of the schools work further to allow children to develop the knowledge and skills more fully to reflect the diverse nature of Scotland in the 21st century and their place in it.

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, at P1 and P7 the majority of children's attainment is good in literacy and numeracy. At P4 most children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Senior leaders and staff have put in place a range of interventions to support children to make better progress in literacy and numeracy. It will be important for staff to continue to develop their understanding of national standards to improve further the reliability of their professional judgements.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress achieving relevant individual targets.

### **Attainment in literacy and English**

- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in literacy and English.

### **Listening and talking**

- At early level, the majority of children listen well to each other and their teachers. At the start of the first level, children are keen to talk about their own experiences and previous learning. Almost all children can take turns during discussions. Children at the start of second level, listen respectfully to each other. They take turns appropriately during class and group discussions. Children working towards the end of second level can describe a few of the techniques required when presenting to their peers. They can also identify what makes a respectful audience. Most children share their ideas and learning with each other confidently. A few children require support to do this. Older children need increased opportunities to engage in debates and present to an audience. Most children across the school contribute enthusiastically and are keen to answer questions in class.

### **Reading**

- At early level, children are developing their understanding of initial sounds and common words. At the start of first level, the majority of children are able to read familiar texts confidently. They make effective use of contextual clues to decode unfamiliar words. Most children working at the start of second level, read with increasing fluency and expression. They can describe well the different strategies they use to decode unfamiliar words or phrases. They engage well in discussions about texts to demonstrate their understanding. Children at this stage are able to identify their favourite books and authors. They make effective use of digital texts to support note taking and report writing. They demonstrate a genuine interest in reading for pleasure. Children working at second level make, effective use of a wide range of texts to increase their knowledge about class topics. The majority read with expression. A few children need more confidence in reading aloud in front of others. Children need prompting to explain their preferences for particular authors and texts. Staff should take steps to promote a greater culture of reading for pleasure across the school.

## Writing

- Across the school, children write for a range of purposes. At the early level, children write as part of their play. They are learning to form letters correctly. At first level, children are beginning to create persuasive writing texts. They can identify a few features of this genre. Children at first level can explain the meaning of a simile, metaphor and onomatopoeia. At second level, children write for a range of purposes. Children working towards the end of second level, are beginning to produce more extended pieces of writing. In a few classes, there is a need for children to improve their use of punctuation, handwriting and the presentation of their written work. Staff have been developing ways to improve children's writing across the school. This includes the development of rubrics which support the planning and assessment of writing.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Across the school, the majority of children are making good progress. There is scope for a few children at all levels to make better progress in numeracy and mathematics.

## Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children can identify, recognise and order all numbers within 20 and beyond with confidence. Children identify all coins to £2 and apply addition skills to pay the exact value for items to 10p. At first level, the majority of children round whole numbers to 10 and 100 and identify accurately the place value of three and four-digit numbers. They carry out a range of calculations with developing confidence and accuracy. Children would benefit from further practice using fractions. At second level, a majority of children read, write and order whole numbers to one million and can identify contexts in which negative numbers are used. Children can demonstrate confidently the benefits and risks of using bank cards and digital technologies. Children need further practice in fractions, decimals, percentages and solving simple algebraic equations.

## Shape, position and movement

- At early level, a majority of children can recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They understand and use the language of position and direction to solve simple problems and demonstrate this using programmable toys. At first level, a majority of children can use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. A majority of children identify where and why grid references are used. A few children know and use the compass points north, south, east and west. Children would benefit from further practice on angles. At second level, children can use mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles. They need to be more confident in identifying and describing reflex and supplementary angles.

## Information handling

- At early level, children can match and sort unfamiliar objects. At first level, children use tally marks to gather data and use this data to create bar charts. Overall, children across the school would benefit from greater opportunities to develop skills in manipulating data to solve problems. This should include opportunities to use digital technology when handling information.

## Attainment over time

- Senior leaders monitor children's attainment in literacy and numeracy over time and have a good understanding of children's next steps in these areas. The school has put in place a number of successful interventions which are helping children make better progress in aspects of literacy and numeracy. This includes team teaching, small group work and targeted support.

- Children's levels of attainment in reading, writing and numeracy dropped following the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the school most children's attainment has now returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Overall, most children are making good progress through CfE levels as they move through the school. Staff need to develop further their understanding of achievement of a level to enable them to make more robust judgements of children's progress.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children are proud of their achievements in and out of school being celebrated at monthly assemblies, displayed prominently across the school and shared more widely with parents and carers through a social media application. This is supporting children to identify their strengths and recognising their success. Teachers should continue to support all children to identify the attributes and skills they develop through participation in all achievement activities. Senior leaders are at the early stages of tracking children's participation and have identified correctly the need to track more robustly children's participation in school clubs and wider activities. This will allow them to identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out.
- Staff work effectively with partners including Active Schools to offer children a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs such as sports clubs and a pop choir. This is supporting children to develop their confidence, teamwork and communication skills well. A minority of older children speak enthusiastically about new leadership responsibilities such as being trained as Play Leaders to support playground games for younger children. They are proud of their contribution to the life of the school. These opportunities are strengthening children's confidence and sense of responsibility. Children are keen to contribute further to the life of the school and wider community. Senior leaders should now look to provide further opportunities for more children to take on leadership roles to allow all children to develop important transferable skills for learning, life and work.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff know their children and families well. They understand the impact that COVID-19 has had on their school community and the increasing financial burdens on families. Staff have established a helpful uniform bank to support families. They have taken positive steps to minimise the cost of the school day and signpost families to relevant community resources for support.
- Senior leaders and staff have identified the school's poverty-related attainment gaps which include attendance, wellbeing and reading. This has been used to help inform how they use PEF. Staff have implemented a wide range of interventions to address the poverty-related attainment gap as a result of this funding received. This includes employing additional staffing to support individuals and groups of children. Recently, a group of children have benefited from a reading intervention, which has resulted in significant improvements in their decoding skills. Senior leaders should continue to monitor and track more robustly the impact of all interventions.

## 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.