

# Summarised inspection findings

Allanton Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

19 September 2023

## Key contextual information

Allanton Primary School and Nursery Class is located in an accessible rural setting serving the local community of Allanton and surrounding area. A minority of children travel to school by bus. Most children attending the school live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles three and four, 9% of pupils live in SIMD one and two. The school roll at the time of the inspection is 89 children, organised into five mixed-age classes. Attendance at school is in line with the local authority average. The school receives £24,810 in Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

In 2021/22 the school underwent a significant refurbishment. Children were relocated to two nearby schools. The primary school children attended one school and the nursery children another. During this time, attendance was below local authority level.

There have been changes in the senior leadership team in recent years. The headteacher took up post six weeks before the inspection. The substantive headteacher retired in June 2021. The school's principal teacher took on the role of acting headteacher in the interim. A class teacher took on the role of acting principal teacher during this time.

### 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

- All staff have a strong focus on developing positive relationships resulting in a caring and nurturing ethos across the school. Staff show a commitment to children's welfare and development resulting in most children feeling safe at school. Across all classes, there are positive interactions between staff and children and children and their peers. Children are proud of their school and keen to share their learning. Staff should continue to support children in developing a strong understanding of children's rights and what they mean for themselves as individuals.
- Most children are engaged and motivated in their learning, particularly when it is linked to relevant, real-life contexts. Most children feel that their teachers support them well in their learning. They enjoy paired and group learning tasks which support teamworking skills. Most teachers provide a range of motivating and engaging learning experiences both in class and outdoors. For example, at first level children carry out a range of experiments outdoors to explore and measure how different materials decompose. Teachers also use the school garden well to develop children's understanding of nature and growing things. Teachers plan a range of learning activities for children across the curriculum. In a few lessons, learning is overly teacher-led. This results in a few children not being appropriately challenged in their learning. Teachers across all stages should work to ensure that children experience pace and challenge more closely matched to their needs. This will ensure better outcomes for all children, including the highest attaining.

- In almost all lessons, teachers explain the purpose of learning and share with the children how they can be successful. In a few lessons, children are involved in co-constructing steps for success. Teachers use questioning effectively to support children's recall and understanding of their learning and build curiosity. Across all classes, children learn to evaluate the quality of their own learning and of their peers. In most lessons, children are provided with a range of oral and written feedback. When children receive high-quality feedback, this helps to identify their successes in their learning. Teachers should ensure feedback clearly identifies what children need to do to further improve their learning and how to make these improvements.
- At early level, teachers are beginning to use play pedagogy to support learning and teaching approaches. Teachers should engage with national guidance to develop the learning environment, quality of children's experiences, and interactions between staff and children. This should help them to enrich children's learning experiences across all levels and allow children opportunities to lead their learning and develop independence.
- Teachers have successfully created a positive reading culture across the school. They have introduced a number of initiatives to promote reading for enjoyment. For example 'read every day and dream' (READ) sessions in every class, a book swap shop for children and adults and regular whole school reading challenges. Staff, in partnership with children have improved the school library. The library is used for classes to select and read books in a calm and relaxing space. Children have successfully achieved silver level of an accredited reading programme for schools and won a national reading competition. Evidence of a positive impact on children's attitudes toward reading is evident. Almost all children recognise reading as a valuable skill to have and the majority of children think they are a good reader. Teachers have been invited to share their practice with other schools at a national level.
- In almost all lessons, teachers successfully use digital tools and resources to consolidate and enhance children's learning. For example, matrix barcodes are used to record and support learning. Across the school, children use a variety of technologies with confidence, such as tablets, laptops and applications. This supports their independent learning and choice. Children benefit from using online games regularly to practise their mental mathematics skills. Younger children confidently use search engines to support research tasks and older children use digital presentation tools to share their learning with others. Children use tablets to record and assess their progress in learning during literacy lessons.
- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches well, including standardised assessments and published materials, to measure children's progress within literacy and numeracy. However, assessment is not integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Senior leaders should continue to support staff in developing further their use of data to inform planning. This should ensure greater consistency in using a range of assessments effectively to evaluate progress and to plan appropriate next steps in learning. Across the school, staff create an annual overview of key learning, which is then planned in more detail on a weekly basis. They use a range of progression pathways to inform their planning. Senior leaders should review approaches to planning learning to ensure children experience greater breadth, depth, relevance and progression in learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Across the school there is a strong ethos of staff collegiality and positive working relationships. Teachers work very well together. They engage in moderation with each other and with colleagues across the local cluster schools. This is helping teachers to become more confident in their professional judgements in literacy and numeracy. As planned, teachers should continue to develop further in moderation of learning across the curriculum. This would further support a shared understanding of progression, pace of learning and achievement within and across Curriculum for Excellence levels.

- Senior leaders use a whole school tracking system to monitor children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy. This is supporting termly discussions about progress of all children and identification of children who require additional support. Senior leaders and staff agree strategies, interventions or resources, which will be used to target improved progress. The support around the child team deliver literacy and numeracy interventions for individuals and small groups. They monitor carefully the progress of children receiving additional support to ensure their needs are being met. As a next step, including information about progression within a level would make the tracking and monitoring system more robust. This should support increased pace, and planning of next steps in learning for all children.

## 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.

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**

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. At P1, P4 and P7 most children attain expected Curriculum for Excellence levels for all aspects of literacy and numeracy. Staff recognise that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the current P4 children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff have introduced a range of targeted interventions. As a result of these interventions, children are making better progress in their learning.
- A few children are capable of working beyond expected levels of attainment. Most children who face barriers to learning are making good progress towards individual targets in literacy and numeracy.

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

- Most children working at early, first and second level are making good progress in literacy and English.

### **Listening and talking**

- Overall, most children listen well and engage in conversation with adults and peers during learning and can respond to the ideas of others respectfully. By the end of early level, most children talk confidently about familiar stories. They share the part they like best. They continue to develop skills in taking turns during class discussions. At first level, the majority of children ask and respond to questions in teacher led discussion. A few require support with listening and responding to each other effectively when working in groups. At second level children build on the opinions and views of others during group work. They can make oral presentations showing awareness of different communication techniques including eye contact, and pace. They are less confident in asking evaluative or inferential questions.

### **Reading**

- Most children working at early level use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read simple words. They are becoming increasingly confident in using context clues to support their understanding of a text. At first level, the majority of children read aloud fluently and are using their knowledge of spelling rules to help them to read unfamiliar words. Children at first level should continue to build their skills in using expression when reading aloud. Most children at second level can read fluently. They confidently discuss characters, setting and summarise the main ideas from a known text. Children know how to skim and scan a range of texts to identify the main ideas. Across the school, children talk positively about the benefits of reading daily. They recognise daily reading has improved their reading fluency and accuracy.

## Writing

- At early level, most children write a few sentences independently. They confidently use their knowledge of sounds to spell familiar words correctly. The majority of children working at first level, write well across a range of genre. They use vocabulary to engage the reader and organise their writing using paragraphs. Children at first level are not yet using a wide range of punctuation effectively appropriate to their stage. At second level, most children write for a range of purposes and audiences. Children apply their knowledge of spelling patterns, punctuation and grammar. They review their writing to ensure it makes sense. Across the school, children write regularly and are given regular opportunities to apply their learning across the curriculum and in real-life contexts. All children would benefit from regular practice to improve handwriting.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good. All children across the school would benefit from numeracy and mathematics concepts being taught more frequently across the school year. This should support children to demonstrate, link, transfer and apply numeracy and mathematical skills with increasing confidence.

## Number, money and measure

- Across all stages, children use a range of strategies to complete calculations mentally appropriate to their age and stage. They can explain their answers with growing confidence. At early level, most children can identify accurately the number before and after in a sequence within 20. They need further practice to read analogue and digital hourly time. The majority of children at first level can successfully read and order numbers within 1,000 and round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. Children need further practice demonstrating linking and applying their multiplication and division skills. At second level, the majority of children can round decimal fractions to the nearest whole number. They use their understanding of the four key numeric operations to solve word problems. They are less confident in using their knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages to solve problems.

## 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. The majority of children working at first level can identify right angles accurately. They can identify and create images with one line of symmetry. Children working at second level can match nets to three-dimensional objects. At first and second level children need to further develop their understanding of positional language. They would benefit from revisiting learning on compass points and coordinates.

## Information handling

- Most children at early level use their knowledge of colour, shape and size well to match and sort items. They can answer questions about information they have gathered or from a simple display. At first and second levels, most children can extract key information and answer questions from an increasing range of charts, bar graphs and tables. At all stages, children would benefit from further practice collecting, organising and displaying meaningful, real-life data in a variety of ways.

## Attainment over time

- Teachers evidence children's progress in literacy and numeracy over the short term. They use this data to inform the provision of additional support for individual children. Senior leaders should now support teachers to use data more effectively to predict children's overall attainment at each level. They should work with teachers to reflect more frequently on the progress children make towards attaining the appropriate level of attainment in literacy and



English and numeracy and mathematics. Their predictions over the long term and professional judgements will continue to be more reliable, as their understanding of children's progress strengthens further.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Staff celebrate children's achievements regularly through the life and work of the school. Weekly assemblies, colourful displays and the use of social media highlight children's achievements in and outside of school. Older children contribute to the life of the school through leadership roles including house captains, pupil council, Digital Diamonds and librarians. Through these roles children develop skills in organising events and presenting information in a range of different ways. There is potential to develop further leadership opportunities for children across the school. Children enjoy taking part in lunch time and after school clubs when they are available. Children would benefit from extending their knowledge and understanding of the range of skills they are developing through these opportunities. This would support further, how skills for learning, life and work can be applied to real and meaningful contexts.
- A next step for teachers is to track children's participation in clubs and committees within the school and local community. This will support them to ensure no child misses out.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a very good understanding of the social, economic and cultural background of children and their families. Senior leaders use PEF allocation appropriately to support raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. PEF funding is used to provide additional staffing to support the reduction of class sizes, staff training and to purchase literacy and numeracy resources. Staff identify barriers to learning that result in attainment gaps. They plan interventions to successfully address these gaps. Senior leaders can demonstrate that PEF interventions are raising attainment for children in literacy and numeracy.
- Senior leaders and staff are very aware of the cost of the school day and are sensitive to the increasing financial pressure on their children and families. They work in partnership with the Parent Council, local church and Active Schools to find solutions to ensure equity of experience for all. In this context children can access a daily breakfast club at no cost and all trips and after school clubs are free to all children.
- Senior leaders work with staff across the learning community to improve attendance. Senior leaders monitor children's attendance closely. They are proactive in addressing concerns and contact parents to offer support to help children return to school. The level of attendance for a few children has improved as a result. Senior leaders continue to focus on improving attendance.



## Other relevant evidence

- The school provides children with two hours of physical education per week. The school's progression pathway for physical education is used to support planning, continuity and progression in learning experiences.
- Children learn through a progressive religious and moral education (RME) programme across the school. They receive their entitlement to religious observance through regular assemblies. The community minister is keen to support RME at Allanton Primary School. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to further develop their partnership working with the local church.
- Children learn French across the school, building appropriately on prior learning to develop their listening, talking and writing skills as they progress through the school. Senior leaders plan to introduce a third language for P5 to P7 children next session.

## 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.