

Summarised inspection findings

St George's Primary School

Glasgow City Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

St George's Primary School is a denominational primary school located in the Penilee area of Glasgow. At the time of the inspection the roll was 207 children at P1 to P7. Most children attend Penilee Early Years Centre before transferring to St George's Primary School at P1.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the school staff reflect consistently well the following aspects of the school's vision: to develop a happy, caring environment where children are valued and their successes celebrated. There is a strong sense of community and children are eager to please the adults who support them to learn. Children are encouraged to foster a love of God and others through the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. The nurture class and the introduction of the key person system are a few examples of the increased focus on wellbeing for targeted children.
- Staff commitment to improving children's confidence is evident and they are developing approaches to apply children's rights across all aspect of their work. Children enjoy coming to school, they report feeling safe and most participate well in the planned tasks and activities. Increased levels of children's engagement and participation in classroom tasks and activities are clearly evident within the approaches to numeracy led by the Challenge Leader of Learning (CLOL).
- The majority of children complete set tasks as individuals, in pairs and in small groups well. A minority complete these to a good standard and demonstrate a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning. There are plans in place to improve the use of digital technology to improve learning. Presently digital learning is used mostly by teachers to enhance their explanations at the beginning of lessons and during plenary sessions to recap on learning.
- The recent stability in staffing has improved the reliability of self-evaluation evidence to inform the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching. While there are important strengths in learning, teaching and assessment these just outweigh the weaknesses. Most teachers plan well-structured lessons using a three part model that clarifies what children are expected to learn and provide a plenary session for children to discuss what they have learned. Assessment approaches in literacy and numeracy are improving and providing more reliable data on children's progress. Moderation activities take place across the school and with the associated primary schools. These provide opportunities for staff to work alongside each other and share examples of work more widely. However, teachers are at an early stage of developing their understanding of achievement of a level within both literacy and numeracy. Staff are beginning to analyse data and identify next steps for learning in numeracy. Assessment data should now be collated more strategically for more effective use.

- Across the school the inconsistencies in practice highlight the need to develop an improved understanding of standards and expectations. Overall assessment approaches do not enable all children to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts across the curriculum. Planning does not show breadth or depth across the curriculum and the school is at the early stages of using benchmarks sufficiently well to reflect children's progress.
- Additional support for learning includes a staged intervention process led by the deputy headteacher. Support staff have an important role in the targeted groups across the school that support learning. They are highly committed to the success of these interventions to improve outcomes for children. Children are enthusiastic about leaving their classes to attend these groups and benefit from the supportive relationships of the adults who help them to learn. However, the high numbers of children identified with barriers to learning affects the sustainability of this approach. There is a need for class teachers to improve their leadership for classroom learning and take greater ownership of meeting the needs of all children in their class throughout the core teaching. There is also a need for aligning well-timed interventions during core learning and teaching more effectively with the targeted group work by the many adults supporting learning throughout the school. Regular, planned focus discussions with class teachers and staff supporting children are not yet in place. As a result, all staff working alongside the children do not have clear roles, responsibilities or opportunities to share information effectively about children's progress. Learning for children who need additional support across the school is at times de-contextualised and children do not always experience or benefit from the same learning as their peers.
- The high numbers of children identified with barriers to learning have additional support plans. Sampled plans reflect well the development needs of the children and interventions to improve their outcomes. It is important that these plans are based on the full range of children's wellbeing needs and involve children in planning their learning effectively.
- The headteacher supports staff well in focused discussions about tracking and monitoring. Staff tracking in planning folders shows children's coverage of experiences and outcomes. These are differentiated within literacy and numeracy and show children's learning pathways through the levels. Teachers are increasing their confidence in tracking and monitoring in numeracy which is supported well by a range of assessment information. However, there are gaps in planning across areas of mathematics, listening, talking, reading and writing. Children are not involved sufficiently well in planning and evaluating their own learning in the key areas of literacy, health and wellbeing or across all areas of the curriculum.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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 children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and weak progress in literacy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Attainment data provided by the school illustrates that most children at P1 are on track to achieve appropriate levels in literacy. The majority of children at P4 are on track to achieve appropriate levels in reading and writing, and most in listening and talking. Most children at P7 are on track to achieve appropriate levels in reading and talking and listening and the majority in writing. Inspection evidence from focus groups, lesson observations and sampling of children's work did not support well enough the school's evaluations or reflect national standards and expectations.
- At most stages of the school children's progress in literacy is inconsistent. Of note, are the improvements children make towards the end of second level. Senior leaders need to develop further their approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress to ensure that professional judgment is reliable. In doing so, they need to be clear about potential barriers to learning and the interventions required to overcome these. Ongoing assessments provided by the school did not reflect well enough the use of National Benchmarks. Planned learning does not demonstrate sufficient breadth, challenge or application across Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers judgements are not consistently robust and reliable across all classes within the school. As a result, the analyses of data of different groups of children is not systematic or robust.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen well to instructions and are engaged during class activities. At early level, most children can hear and say single sounds and most can hear and say blends. However, they require further support to develop their listening and talking skills. Most children do not listen well enough to each other. They are unable to listen and respond appropriately to others questions or make predictions without adult prompts. Children are not able to explore and retell familiar stories independently or using for example puppets or props. At first level there are gaps in listening and talking that need addressed. They are unable to listen and talk with others for a range of purposes. When working in groups a majority of children do not listen or respond appropriately during discussions or engage with others for a range of purposes. They are unable to discuss topics with increasing complexity in ideas. At second level, most children participate in class and group discussions well. They take turns and ask appropriate questions when working in pairs and small groups. Children are at the early stages of contributing a number of relevant ideas or discuss topics with complex ideas. They are less confident in planning or delivering oral presentations that show depth of understanding. There is room to improve children's debating skills when they are sharing their ideas and opinions.

Reading

- In recent years there has been a focus on developing approaches to reading across the school which have not yet impacted sufficiently well on children's reading skills. At early level most children are developing their knowledge of phonics to read simple words. Most can read CVC words and the majority can hear and say blends at the start of words. A few children can identify blends at the end of words. The pace at early level is too slow. A significant number of children at the early level do not access a range of books and are not fluent in their early reading skills. As a result most children do not yet have well developed word attack skills. They are unable to read a range of sight vocabulary or new words in context. By the end of first level, a few children can talk about favourite books and authors. They are at the early stages of developing effective comprehension skills and strategies. The majority know what literal, inferential and evaluative questions are. The majority can answer literal questions and a few can answer inferential and evaluative questions. Most can skim and scan texts to find basic information. However, they cannot confidently identify key points and summarise the main ideas. There is a need to ensure children are reading texts with appropriate levels of challenge. By the end of second level, children can make notes about texts using headings. Most can summarise their notes to show their understanding of the text. Children working at first and second level have limited opportunities to read aloud. This is impacting on their understanding. At second level, children can name a few favourite authors and books. They are not yet confident in explaining why they prefer specific authors or genre. The books they choose to read for enjoyment are not sufficiently challenging. Children working at second level are unable to talk confidently about the different styles of writing authors use. They would benefit from reading a wider range of texts to foster their enjoyment for reading.

Writing

- The standard of children's writing across the school is inconsistent. By the end of second level, the majority of children write at length for an increasing range of purposes. However, children's progress at early and first level in writing is not in line with national expectations. At early level, most children form letters correctly and most attempt to spell familiar words correctly in taught writing activities. As a result of this narrowing approach they are not able to write to convey their own experiences or feelings. This is giving children a limited understanding of the purpose of writing. Children would benefit from opportunities to write for a wide variety of purposes and in a range of contexts to apply their skills in new contexts. At first level, the majority of children punctuate sentences accurately and attempt to spell familiar words using their knowledge of phonics. A few children use strategies to spell unfamiliar words. A few children are using conjunctions to vary their sentence structure. Children at first level do not write frequently across a range of genre or convey their points of view. Presentation of work is not of a high enough standard. By the end of second level standards of expectation of children's writing improves. Children can apply their skills in writing for an increasing range of purposes and across curricular areas. Most can write in paragraphs and the majority use punctuation effectively. Most children vary their sentence structure to engage the reader and maintain their interest. They select appropriate ways to present their writing including using headings and bullet points. Most children can create notes to organise their ideas and organise their writing in a logical way.

Attainment in numeracy

- Overall, attainment in numeracy is satisfactory. Most children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in numeracy at early and second levels with the majority of children achieving the appropriate level at first level.
- Most children are confident in place value, basic addition and time. There is increasing confidence and accuracy when working with fractions. Across the school, most children make satisfactory progress in mental agility. Children choose from and describe a variety of strategies that they use to make accurate calculations. However, there are a number of

significant gaps in children's learning, particularly in mathematics and problem solving. Staff need to ensure that children develop skills across all numeracy and mathematics organisers. Children would benefit from more opportunities to develop and apply their mathematical knowledge in real-life contexts.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count and order numbers within 15. They know numbers before and after when counting on and back. They identify half and quarter of a shape. Skills in doubling should be developing. At first level, most children round to the nearest ten and 100. They make three-digit addition and subtraction calculations accurately. They are less confident in using times tables. By second level, most children confidently order fractions and identify equivalent fractions. They add, subtract and multiply using decimal numbers. They understand place value up to seven-figure numbers. Children spoke enthusiastically about calculating profit and loss while fundraising for their residential trip.

Information handling

- At first level, children use tally marks and total them. However, there is little evidence of information handling skills being developed at early and second levels. Children at second level did not know the terms: Venn diagram, pie chart or mean average. They are not confident in presenting information in a variety of diagrams, tables and graphs using digital technologies.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, children recognise and sort a variety of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects. They are beginning to use positional language accurately. At first level, they use terms millimetre and centimetre and are able to use squared paper to draw an area of a shape. They are less confident when naming right, acute and obtuse angles. They identify north and south compass points. By second level, children identify the properties of common 2D shapes and 3D objects. They confidently classify acute, obtuse and straight angles and can calculate missing angles. They calculate the perimeter and area of rectangles, squares and triangles. They are less confident when calculating the circumference and area of circles.

Learner's achievements

- There are examples of activities within and outwith the classroom which develop children's self-confidence, teamwork and communication skills. These include, for example, involvement in the successful school choir whose achievements include performances for the local community within care homes and fundraising concerts. The further development of musical skills is also available through a popular school guitar club and small groups of guitar tuition throughout the school day.
- Children participate in a range of trips linked to their curriculum. For example, at P1, children visit the Pollok Resource Centre for 'Once upon a Time' and P6/7 visit the science centre. Throughout the session all classes participate in sports activities such as football, rugby and dance provided by the active schools team. A minority of children develop these skills further after school through attendance at sessions organised in partnership with a local football club. They also participate in a basketball tournament. Children at P7 demonstrate leadership skills when organising and managing pupil led activity days.
- There are a few examples of older children developing well the four capacities through the broad general education. However, across the school learning does not cover well enough all curricular areas. As a result, children are not well enough equipped as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. In addition, there is considerable scope for the school to extend the provision of activities and leadership to include pupils at all stages. Systematic tracking of skills and developing children's ability to articulate what they are achieving are not in place.

Attainment over time

- The school provided data from Glasgow City Council's tracking tool showing attainment of children over time. In addition, portfolios of work show examples of children's progress from P1 onwards. However, samples of work evaluated by the inspection team and classroom observations show that learners make variable progress from their prior learning. Assessment data is not used consistently well by individual class teachers to ensure that children make very good progress from their prior learning. There are examples of children writing well when motivated by the context. For a minority of children, they do not maintain this standard across all their written work.

Equity for all

- The nurture room provides well-planned targeted support for individual and groups of children. There are many examples of children making very good progress within this environment. The school is developing its approaches to applying nurturing principles. We asked the school to continue, as planned, to reflect on practice and embed their nurturing approach across the whole school.
- The headteacher and depute headteacher prioritise raising attainment for all and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. There is evidence in pre and post intervention assessments that identified children benefit from additional support. In a few cases, children make very good progress within measures that relate to a specific intervention. We asked the school to reflect on the many interventions in place and evaluate how these contribute to improving children's health and wellbeing, their literacy and or numeracy over time in relation to the Curriculum for Excellence levels. The school is not yet able to articulate how children's progress from the planned interventions are sustainable.
- The school orally shared with the inspection team the plans for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Parents, staff and pupils should be consulted on the use of school funding, including PEF, to raise attainment and achievement.

Other relevant evidence

- At the time of the inspection planning folders, samples of work, classroom observations and children's responses in focus groups did not reflect well enough that children receive an entitlement to a broad general education. The approach to interdisciplinary learning in place across the school is not well enough understood by all class teachers to ensure that all children receive a broad progressive curriculum that challenges children at the appropriate level. In addition, there are insufficient opportunities for children to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. This impacts on the quality of learning and outcomes for children.
- In literacy there is no planned or progressive approaches for listening and talking. In reading children do not engage with reading text until the end of P1 and start of P2. Moving forward it will be important to regularly review and evaluate the impact of the revised approach to teaching reading and ensure appropriate pace and progression for all children. Children from P3 to P7 borrow books from the library trolley that tours the school weekly. There is scope to further develop the school library to create an engaging environment that further promotes reading for enjoyment for all children. A few classes use novel studies and texts linked to topic work. This is creating relevant and meaningful contexts for reading. Overall the pace of learning in reading is too slow. There continues to be duplication of texts read by older and younger children. In writing, the pace at early and first level is too slow and there is an inconsistent approach to teaching writing. Teachers across the school should ensure all children have planned opportunities to write regularly for meaningful purposes. In writing, there are no opportunities for children at early level to write for enjoyment through play or across the curriculum.
- The school's data includes a number of children receiving high levels of additional support in order to achieve minimum expected levels. It is not clear if interventions will ensure children's progress is sustainable or achievable without high levels of adult support. In addition, there is a need for all class teachers to monitor closely and improve children's attendance.
- Effective deployment of the CLOL in numeracy is making a positive difference to children's progress. The CLOL coaching in context sessions are appropriately targeted in classes to raise attainment. Staff across the school embrace the professional learning led by 'Glasgow Counts' and this is strengthening the whole school approach to numeracy. As a result, the majority of children are appropriately challenged by learning in numeracy which is well matched to their needs and levels of interest. However, this is not embedded fully across the school to ensure a consistency of approach. In addition, staff are at the early stages of taking forward leadership opportunities to improve the overall quality of experience for all children within their own class and across the school. Expectations of children are not high enough, the pace of learning is too slow and their core curriculum does not provide enough breadth to their experiences.

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.