Summarised inspection findings

Tollcross Primary School

The City of Edinburgh Council

18 March 2025

Key contextual information

Tollcross Primary School is located in Edinburgh. It serves the area of Fountainbridge. The school building sits in a shared community campus.

At the time of inspection, the roll was 240 children, organised across nine classes. The senior leadership team consists of a headteacher, who has been in post since 2018, one depute headteacher and a principal teacher.

Across the school, 10.2% of children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation Deciles 1, 2 and 3, and 22.8% reside in deciles 8, 9 and 10. The Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocation to the school is £57,575. Nineteen per cent of pupils in P6 and P7 are registered for free school meals. Fifty-two percent of children have English as an additional language.

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	

■ Children and staff model the school values of being kind, respectful and safe, in all aspects of school life. As a result of this, almost all learning takes place in calm and welcoming classrooms. Children understand the importance of their diverse school community and their role in making everyone feel welcome in Tollcross Primary. They are proud of their school and are keen to discuss the many ways that they celebrate a wide variety of cultures and beliefs. Positive relationships between children and staff are a strength of the school. Children feel cared for and supported in their learning.

■ Staff worked collaboratively to consider learning environments that best suit the needs of all children. As a result, classrooms are bright and welcoming spaces with informative displays. Children use displays to support their learning and to help them reflect and build on what they already know. All classrooms have allocated reading areas that children can use as required. These areas support children to regulate their behaviour if they need a quieter space and ensure they remain connected with ongoing learning activities.

■ In almost all lessons, children are well behaved and work well together. Staff deal with the few instances of low-level disruption respectfully. Increased pace and challenge would further limit disruption of this type. Most lessons provide a mixture of appropriate activities such as paired and group tasks. However, a few lessons are overly teacher led and this leads to the pace of learning being too slow. Children have the opportunity to choose their learning activity in most lessons. The choices often reflect different levels of challenge. In a few lessons, these options are not demanding enough to challenge all children. Teachers should review the effectiveness of this approach to ensure children make sufficient progress. Teachers should ensure activities match children's differing learning needs and provide the right level of challenge.

- Staff are aware of the school context and community. Teachers and appropriate support staff have access to helpful information for children they work with. This information means that they implement supports and adaptations that best meet the needs of almost all children. Teachers and support staff plan learning programmes together. As a result, supports and interventions are identified, and put in place, at an early stage. Staff are able to work together to meet the needs of almost all children who need additional support with their learning. Senior leaders work well with a wide variety of partners to support the needs of children and families. Senior leaders ensure that language supports are in place for parents when communicating with staff. Parents welcome this support and feel this helps them to be fully engaged in their child's learning.

- Teachers plan learning and teaching effectively with stage partners and this is leading to more consistent approaches throughout the school. Children are beginning to be more involved in the co-construction of the steps they need to take to be successful in lessons. As a result, most children understand the purpose of their learning and know what they need to do to be successful. Almost all teachers use plenaries at key points in lessons. In the best examples, teachers use high-quality plenaries to clarify understanding, reinforce learning and support children in their next steps in learning. A few teachers provide high quality verbal feedback to children on their learning. Senior leaders should share this good practice across all stages. They should also develop approaches for teachers to record this feedback in children's classwork. This will help children to understand their next steps, and what they need to do to improve.

- In almost all lessons, teachers use questioning very effectively to check for understanding. In a few lessons, teachers' questioning promotes curiosity and encourages children to think more deeply about their learning. Staff should continue to develop their use of skilful questioning across the school and develop all children's higher order thinking skills further.

- Teachers plan a range of formative and summative assessments across the year effectively. Teachers collaborate effectively with stage partners and senior leaders to discuss and moderate school and national assessment evidence. The senior leadership team meets with staff regularly to discuss teachers' judgements. Teachers make effective use of assessment data. They use this information well to identify children who would benefit from specific interventions to help address gaps in their learning. This has led to improved attainment in literacy and numeracy for a targeted group of children.

- Teachers have worked well with colleagues in cluster schools to share practice in the use of differentiated learning approaches. Additional moderation activities within the cluster are supporting teachers to strengthen their understanding of national standards.

- Digital learning is a strength at Tollcross Primary School. All teachers have undertaken effective professional learning in the use of digital technologies. Children in senior classes make effective use individual devices to record and share their learning. Children confidently use a variety of applications to support their learning. This includes the use of language interpretation applications to support learning for children with English as an additional language. Staff plan engaging activities that include digital learning resources as a central part of lessons. Teachers use digital matrix codes to link learning with helpful revision and support resources that children can access easily and discretely. Children in senior classes lead learning hubs that support staff and younger pupils to develop their own digital skills and knowledge.

- Teachers at P1 and P2 plan appropriate play opportunities in a variety of learning spaces. Children have regular opportunities to investigate, explore and use loose parts in the outdoor

spaces. Teachers use learning spaces and resources to plan engaging, adult-led learning opportunities. They should now provide more open ended, child-initiated activities to help develop children's thinking and independent learning skills. Teachers are increasing their understanding of the role adults play in observing children's learning through play experiences. They are beginning to gather and use their observations to identify children's progress in learning and to support future planning. Senior leaders have allocated additional staffing to P 1 to support the development of play pedagogy. As a next step, all staff should continue to develop their understanding of play pedagogy to encourage children to become more independent and take increasing responsibility in their learning.

■ All staff use agreed formats and progression pathways to plan appropriately for short, medium, and long-term learning. Teachers plan collegiately which ensures a level of consistency across year groups and stages in the school. Most teachers are beginning to use responsive planners to support children to lead their learning and plan interdisciplinary learning experiences that children find enjoyable and motivating.

■ Senior leaders have established highly effective tracking arrangements. They meet staff termly to track and monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. During discussions, senior leaders, and staff, review the range of data gathered to identify children who are not making expected progress, and they agree appropriate interventions and supports. As a result, most learners receiving targeted support in literacy and numeracy are making good progress in relation to their personal targets.

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, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good.

- Almost all children at P1 and most children at P4 achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy in session 2023-24. Almost all children at P7 achieved expected CfE levels in numeracy, listening and talking and reading and most in writing in session 2023-24. Most children in P1, P4 and P7 are on track to achieve expected national standards in literacy and numeracy.

- Most children who require additional support for their learning, are making good progress against their individual targets for learning. A few children at first and second level are exceeding national expectations in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English
- Most children at early, first and second levels, make good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and talking
- Across the school, children participate well in group discussions. Most children listen and talk respectfully with their peers and adults. At early level, most children show their understanding by answering questions and following instructions. At first level, most children are developing the skills of turn-taking and contributing appropriately to group discussions. At second level, most children are successfully developing and applying their skills in listening and talking in group and class settings. Most children speak confidently and articulately and can explain reasons for their responses. Almost all children are developing skills in presenting through group assembly presentations. Teachers should continue to develop a wider variety of experiences to support the development of children's verbal presentation skills.

Reading
- At early level, almost all children are developing well their knowledge of sounds, letters, and blends. They answer simple literal questions about a text. Children should continue to be supported to develop decoding skills. At first level, most children identify their favourite authors and genres, justifying their choices. They use a variety of word recognition strategies, such as locating and pronouncing familiar letter patterns and blends. They need to read aloud more frequently to different audiences to improve their fluency. At second level, children are enthusiastic about reading for enjoyment. Most children read well with fluency and expression, using appropriate pace and tone. Most children identify confidently the main ideas and supporting detail of texts.

Writing

■ At early level, most children write letters and words and form letters legibly. They spell simple words correctly. As planned, staff should now develop children's ability to write sentences, using common words, capital letters and full stops. At first level, most children plan and organise their ideas using appropriate formats and create texts for different purposes. Children should develop further their skills in punctuation, spelling, and use of relevant and interesting vocabulary to engage the reader. Most children working towards second level apply their knowledge of spelling rules to spell most common words correctly. They use a range of techniques in their writing to influence and persuade their audience. Overall, children would benefit from further opportunities to write at length across the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Most children at early, first and second levels, make good progress from their prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

■ At early level, most children order numbers within the range 0 to 30. Most children add within 20. Children are not yet confident to subtract within 10. Almost all children know the names of the days of the week in sequence, they know the months of the year and recognise features of the four seasons. At first level, most children confidently count forwards and backwards in 2s, 5s, 10s, and 100s. Most children tell the time accurately using half past, quarter past and quarter to, using digital and analogue clocks. At second level, most children are confident to order numbers less than zero and locate them on a number line. Most children identify appropriate contexts in which negative numbers are used. Across first and second level children are less confident in applying the correct mathematical notation and appropriate units in a range of contexts.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level, most children create and describe symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. Most children confidently recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes. They are less confident at describing three dimensional objects. At first level, most children know that a right angle is 90 degrees. Most children know and use compass points. They accurately describe, plot, and record the locations of a point using coordinate notation to create designs. Across first and second levels, children need opportunities to apply their skills in relevant and engaging learning experiences across the curriculum.

Information handling

■ At early level, most children are confident answering questions about favourite foods from a bar graph. They contribute towards collecting data to create a class bar graph. At first level, most children create bar graphs which include a suitable title, with simple labelling on both axes. They effectively answer questions about the data. At second level, most children collect, organise and display data accurately for example, creating surveys, bar graphs and simple pie charts. They are not as confident in the use of line graphs and frequency tables.

Attainment over time

■ Senior leaders have implemented effective systems to track and monitor children's attainment levels over time. Whole-school attainment data is affected by the fluctuating school roll and the number of children who require additional support, including those for whom English is not their first language. Senior leaders and staff make effective use of data to follow the progress of children throughout the school. As a result, senior leaders take prompt action to ensure appropriate interventions are in place for children who require additional support in their learning. Overall, most children make strong progress from prior levels of attainment over time.

As planned, senior leaders should track and monitor the progress of specific groups of learners such as children who have experienced care or have English as an additional language.

■ Teachers use assessment data and national Benchmarks well to support their professional judgements of children's attainment. Senior leaders' attainment data shows, attainment over time has been sustained across all stages. Staff recently implemented initiatives for the teaching of numeracy and writing, and these are beginning to show an improvement in the attainment of children at key stages. Senior leaders should now track children's attainment through a level and across all curricular areas.

■ Senior leaders make effective use of Pupil Equity Funding to support improving attendance and late coming. Staff closely monitor and track non-attendance to identify trends and patterns and implement appropriate interventions to provide support to children and families. This has resulted in increased attendance for most children whose previous attendance was below 85%.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

■ Teachers celebrate and share children's individual and collective achievements effectively during assemblies and on wall displays. Children are proud that their successes are recognised and valued. This builds children's confidence and motivation. Children receive 'Pupil of the Week' certificates when demonstrating school values and to recognise personal successes in and out with school.

■ Staff and the school community offer a wide variety of activities for children across the year, such as running, coding and Korean clubs. Children's achievements both in and outside of school are tracked by senior leaders. Staff are developing approaches to ensure children who are not participating in activities are given opportunities to do so. Children in the upper stages enjoy participating in the Master Classes. These classes focus on developing key skills such as communication and team building. Staff should consider a more strategic approach to the development of skills for learning, life and work across all stages.

■ Children have leadership roles both within the classroom and across the school. For example, older children act as Rights Rangers, Young Interpreters, and participate in Diversity and Equalities groups. This develops children's organisational skills well and helps them to be effective contributors. Older children gain skills in leadership, organisation, and communication through their 'Young Leaders' group. Children develop well their decision-making, event planning and problem-solving skills in their groups. Staff should develop further opportunities for children at the younger stages to assume leadership and committee roles to support all children to develop their skills.

Equity for all learners

■ All staff clearly understand the socio-economic background of the children and their families. They demonstrate well their shared vision for every child to have equity of opportunity within an inclusive environment. They consider data about free school meals, clothing grant eligibility and the range and distribution of children's additional support needs. This informs staff's approaches to providing targeted support, ensuring that children's backgrounds and experiences are valued. Children and families benefit in a range of practical ways from support they receive. This includes support provided through English language lessons. Children have access to a breakfast club which helps individuals to be ready to learn.

■ Staff have well-established approaches to reducing the cost of the school day. This ensures all children and families can participate fully in the life of the school. Staff and partners offer free extra-curricular clubs and ensure all children can attend a residential experience. Full financial assistance for these activities available for those in receipt of free school meals and living

within SIMD 1 and 2. Staff and partners offer a well-resourced, 'pop-up shop' offering uniforms and clothing for the residential trip.

◼ Senior leaders' use of the school's PEF allocation is leading to improved outcomes for children's wellbeing, inclusion, participation, and attendance. Through collaborative discussions and self-evaluation, staff reflect on and assess the impact of interventions, identifying key successes. Senior leaders and staff should continue to gather robust attainment evidence to ensure that PEF is accelerating the progress in learning of identified children. There is scope to involve parents in identifying future priorities for PEF

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Other relevant evidence

- Staff collaborated closely with the Parent Council to refurbish the school library. Children now access an attractive school library with well-resourced books as well as class libraries. Children are proud of the input they had in selecting texts that reflect the diverse school community. As a result, all children regularly access the library to select texts to read for enjoyment and have a wide genre of reading materials to select from.

- All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) every week.

- All children are taught Spanish and older children learn Mandarin. This is in alignment with the 1+2 languages policy.

- Children receive their entitlement to religious education. Across the school, children experience a progressive learning pathway in religious education. Children benefit from sharing and celebrating their different faiths in the school to support their growing understanding of Christianity and other world religions. This is supporting their developing understanding of diversity in the world.

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.