

Summarised inspection findings

St Mungo Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

21 January 2025

Key contextual information

St Mungo Primary School is a small school which serves the village of Kettleholm and surrounding rural areas including Castlemilk Estate. There are two multi-stage classes, P1-4 and P5-7. The school roll is 26 children. Most children access their places in the school through placement requests. St Mungo Primary is part of Lockerbie Cluster with most P7 children attending Lockerbie Academy. Children attend several local early learning and childcare settings.

In addition to the main school building, there is a temporary classroom building used as a general-purpose room and a dining room. St Mungo Primary School has a variety of outdoor spaces around the school building and access to a woodland area nearby.

The headteacher was appointed in April 2024 and also has responsibility for a partner school. There have been significant staffing changes, including senior leadership posts, and staff absences in recent years that have negatively affected all areas of work.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- Children are friendly and polite in their interactions with their peers, school staff and visitors. All staff prioritise providing nurturing approaches and inclusive learning environments for all children. All staff are highly motivated to expand their professional knowledge and have a strong team approach to improve learning opportunities for children and families. Staff's professional learning in trauma awareness and relational approaches has improved learning environments where staff correctly prioritise putting children at the centre. They exhibit the school values of achieving, respectful, responsible and creative in their daily interactions with children. Staff use a recently implemented relationships policy well to ensure consistency of approaches and interventions to promote positive behaviour. Children are well supported to make choices about when to access these spaces to support them to manage their emotions. For example, when they are starting to feel dysregulated and need time to regulate before their learning. This approach is helping children well to recognise events that impact on their emotions and behaviours and to develop strategies to support them. Staff have been trained in intervention and de-escalation techniques to support regulation of behaviour. Staff confidence in applying these approaches is developing well. Staff work very well with partners to apply strategies and interventions to support children to regulate behaviour. This is reducing the impact on peers of dysregulated behaviour and violent incidents. Staff's use of these strategies increases children's ability to engage in learning.
- Teachers provide clear instructions and explanations of what and how children are going to learn across a variety of curricular areas. They use questioning increasingly well to extend children's thinking and to check for understanding. Teachers share what children will learn and how they will evaluate their learning in the majority of lessons. They use a variety of contexts

and activities well. Teachers need to monitor the balance of teacher led learning and time for children to lead their own learning. The majority of children sustain appropriate levels of engagement and motivation during most lessons. Children's engagement levels are more sustained when the pace and challenge meets their needs appropriately.

- Teachers and children worked well together last session to establish a shared expectation of a high-quality learning experience. The headteacher has created a helpful collegiate approach to allow staff to work across the partnership. This approach aims to encourage staff's development of a learning and teaching toolkit through professional learning and dialogue with peers. This will serve as a collaborative resource for teachers to access and improve further their professional knowledge.
- Staff recognise the importance of outdoor learning and play-based learning. They make effective use of the school's various indoor and outdoor learning environments to support this well. This includes weekly visits to a woodland area and exploration of local and natural landmarks. Staff are at the early stages of implementing play-based pedagogy with younger children. Teachers across the school would benefit from developing further their current practice around the role of the adult in play. This will ensure that play is planned and evaluated more effectively to provide more challenge and continuity in all areas of learning. Teachers use national guidance and local authority visiting staff effectively to develop further the environments, interactions and spaces. Teachers should continue as planned to learn from effective practice in other schools to develop their practice further.
- Staff and children use available digital technology to support aspects of learning and teaching well. This is not yet an integral part of teaching approaches across all areas of the curriculum. Staff are aware of the importance of technology and should take forward plans to improve children's digital skills and learning. This will better equip children to understand and manage their digital skills and enhance their learning further.
- The headteacher correctly identified the need for improved consistency in the use of diagnostic and teacher devised assessments. They have recently introduced an assessment rubric, planned assessments for reading and annual assessment calendar to support consistency in the use of a range of assessments and data. This supports teachers to ensure their professional judgements are more robust and helps to improve the quantity and reliability of data to show children's attainment over time.
- Teachers share feedback with children in a variety of ways and are encouraging them to think about what they have learnt. Teachers use an increasing amount of formative assessment strategies to provide children with feedback and check for understanding and engagement. They are developing written feedback to help children improve their work and understand their next steps in learning. In addition, teachers use diagnostic assessments in literacy and numeracy to identify what children know. Children are increasingly involved in effective self-and peer-assessment, particularly in literacy.
- Teachers are supported by the headteacher to develop further a shared understanding of national standards. Teachers engage in termly attainment meetings and professional dialogue with colleagues within the school and across the partnership school. During these opportunities, teachers discuss national standards and children's progress. Senior leaders should continue with plans to work more regularly and moderate with colleagues across the local schools cluster. This will support staff's understanding as they evaluate the validity and reliability of class-based assessments.

- The headteacher supports teachers well to identify and plan support for children who require additional support in their learning. Senior leaders and teachers use outcomes from relevant assessments to deliver plans effectively. These plans support children to make good progress towards individual targets and from prior levels of learning. Teachers plan over different timescales using recently created planning systems. Teachers engage well with children to gather their ideas and prior knowledge. Teachers are beginning to embed children's rights, skills for learning, life and work, opportunities for personal achievement and outdoor learning into their planning. Teachers should continue to ensure assessment is integral to planning and tracking. This should improve further the pace and breadth of curricular areas and quality of children's experiences.
- The headteacher and teachers meet termly for 'raising attainment conversations' where they discuss children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. During discussions, teachers talk about their attainment predictions for individual learners and cohorts and discuss possible actions and interventions. Staff record this information on a whole school tracker. This is improving how children's attainment over time is tracked. Staff have specific individualised planning in place for those children who require it. All staff are aware of the individual circumstances of children and their families and make good use of this information to take appropriate steps to ensure children have positive outcomes. This includes working with a range of partner agencies, where appropriate, to ensure children access the support that best meets their needs. The headteacher should continue to support teachers to use assessment data diagnostically to plan for focused interventions.

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

satisfactory

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

- Due to small numbers on the school roll attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups and levels.
- Overall, most children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children are achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. Overall, children who require support with learning make good progress from their prior levels of learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children make satisfactory progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Most younger children listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. Most younger children talk and take turns when participating in discussions. Older children increasingly use appropriate body language, tone or gestures when speaking with others. They build on the opinions and information provided by others during group discussions. Older children would benefit from taking part in debates about topical issues or subjects that interest them. All children should develop further their ability to share their views and opinions and listen attentively to others.

Reading

- Younger children recognise initial sounds and blend them to form common words. They listen to texts and share key information about them. The majority of older children read familiar texts with increasing fluency and expression. They make predictions before reading a text using the title and cover illustrations. They skim and scan to answer questions and summarise the main ideas from a text. Children are less confident in answering inferential and evaluative questions about familiar texts. They talk about favourite authors and types of texts and give explanations about why they enjoy them. Older children would benefit from developing their ability to identify techniques that authors use to engage readers.

Writing

- Younger children understand that writing communicates meaning and are developing their ability to sequence events. Staff encourage children to mark make during play and real-life experiences. Younger children are developing their knowledge of lowercase and uppercase letters. Older children use a variety of punctuation, connectives, adjectives and openers. They experience an increasing range of genres and are developing their ability to describe the

specific features and purposes of each. Older children use similes and adjectives. A few older children would benefit from more opportunities to write at length and for real-life experiences.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children recognise numbers to 10. They are developing their one-to-one correspondence by counting objects. They order numbers to five and a few can identify missing numbers. They recognise and use a variety of coins during imaginative play experiences. Older children are confident with place value and partitioning using two-, three- and four-digit numbers. Older children are increasingly confident with mental calculations, number problems and strategies linked to place value, money and measurements. They add and subtract four-, five- and six-digit numbers. Most older children would benefit from further consolidation in recording fractions and understanding the mathematical terminology of fractions.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children recognise and describe common two-dimensional shapes. They could develop further their use of positional language using construction and block play. Children are aware of symmetry and are increasing their ability to find lines of symmetry. Older children name and describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. Children need to develop further their knowledge and drawing of angles and calculation of radius and diameters of circles.

Information handling

- Most children are aware of bar graphs and how to collect data using tally charts. Across all stages children need increased opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge of information handling. Children need greater experience of how data can be recorded, including the use and interpretation of data using digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- Overall, the majority of children make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy over time. The headteacher and staff have recently implemented processes and systems to record and track children's attainment over time. Staff now have a clearer evidence base which better illustrates how they are improving children's progress.
- The headteacher monitors attendance on a regular basis. The school experiences minimal issues relating to attendance, but percentages are affected due to the small school roll. The headteacher contacts families when a child's attendance dips to between 90 and 95% or a series of late arrivals are identified. The attendance figures for the school are above the national average.
- The headteacher has identified the need to support children at risk of experiencing exclusion to reduce the number overall. Teachers have engaged in professional learning and made changes to learning environments such as creating designated calm areas to support children displaying dysregulated behaviours in school. Due to small numbers on the school roll and the risk of identifying individual children, exclusion data will not be included in the inspection report.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Senior leaders and school staff celebrate children's achievements in assemblies, school displays and online newsletters. Families are encouraged to share out-of-school achievements through the use of online forms. Staff track participation in activities both in and out of school and use this information to identify gaps in children's opportunities for achievement. Staff now

need to discuss with children how achievements link to skills for learning, life and work. This should support children to understand the skills they are developing within school and beyond as a result.

- Across the school, children are developing well skills such as collaborating, communicating and leadership through pupil leadership groups. Children develop these through groups such as community citizens, playground busters and St Mungo kids' council. The groups focus on aspects of school improvement and support children to be responsible citizens and effective contributors. Children are applying skills in managing risk in their use of outdoor spaces, including the adjoining forest and a recent residential experience for older children. Children's work on a national woodland conservation award and joint learning with the partnership school broadens opportunities for learning within the wider environment. As planned, staff should progress creative ways to extend the offer of out of school activities, clubs and the engagement of parent volunteers. This will extend children's experiences and skills further and help them to make meaningful links with the wider community.

Equity for all learners

- All staff understand the context of the school and potential barriers to learning faced by some children and families, including those who may be financially disadvantaged. Staff take effective action to address the cost of the school day. They consider carefully the cost of activities and source funding to reduce financial demands on families. This ensures financial circumstances are not a barrier to children's access, participation and inclusion in opportunities.
- The headteacher carefully tracks the progress and attainment of learners who may be affected by socio-economic disadvantage. They use tracking data well to prioritise Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional staff and resources. These additional resources are used to deliver a range of effective interventions to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy. This supports children who are not making expected levels of progress or who have barriers to their learning. The headteacher completes planning and reporting documentation in relation to PEF. The headteacher needs to consult with children and their families about their plans for the use of PEF. The use of participatory budgeting would develop further children's influence on decisions in school that affect them.

Other relevant evidence

- Across the school children are learning French. Children are not receiving their entitlement to 1+2 modern languages.
- All children regularly access the school library to select books to read for enjoyment and for their individual reading schemes. Children keep the library organised and children are aware of the importance of reading to support other curricular areas.
- All children experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week. There are regular opportunities for children to participate in sports opportunities with external coaches.

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.