

Summarised inspection findings

Finty Primary School

Stirling Council

9 September 2025

Key contextual information

Fintry Primary School is a non-denominational primary school in the village of Fintry, Stirlingshire and is a member of the Balforn Learning Community. The school is surrounded by large playgrounds and extensive natural areas including a multi-sports pitch, a woodland area and areas for growing flowers and vegetables.

The established headteacher has been in post for 14 years. She is also headteacher for Buchlyvie Primary School and Arnprior Nursery. A principal teacher supports the headteacher in leading and managing the school.

At the time of inspection, the school roll was 60 children across three multi-composite classes. A minority of children across the school have additional support needs. In September 2023, almost all children lived in decile eight and a few children lived in decile seven of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. In February 2024, there were no P6-P7 children registered for free school meals.

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 benefit from positive and respectful relationships with staff across the school. They are happy and proud of their school. They are articulate, friendly and polite. Children display good manners and are kind and thoughtful towards others. They understand very well their school values of safe, resilient, respectful, hardworking and responsible. Children describe how these values impact on their relationships, behaviour and help them in their learning. Across all stages, almost all children display positive behaviour and reflect that the school helps them to understand and respect other people.
- The ethos and culture across the school is underpinned by a relationship-based approach within a whole school nurturing environment. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and children are supported well by restorative and solution focused approaches. Children have opportunities to regulate their behaviour well through the use of sensory body breaks. They can access 'The Snug' which is a calm, nurturing space where children can learn or use when they feel overwhelmed and need support to regulate their behaviour.
- The headteacher seeks, values and acts upon children views effectively through the Fintry Forum. This has led to all children being involved in democratic decision making leading to school improvements. For example, they have enhanced their reading for enjoyment through the purchase of a wider range of reading resources, including class library books and audio books. Older children have the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the life of the school in a range of leadership opportunities such as the reading schools' award group, the gardening

group and the reading buddies. The headteacher and staff should now widen these leadership opportunities to all children. This should support all children to develop these important skills.

- The headteacher and staff have developed useful documents to support a shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching. They should now embed these further to ensure these are applied more consistently across the school. In doing so, they should also develop these documents further to include a shared understanding of effective questioning, high quality feedback and opportunities for children to lead learning.
- In most lessons, teachers plan activities well, ensuring a balance of opportunities for children to work independently, in pairs or groups. Almost all children are attentive throughout learning and co-operate well in pairs and in groups. Children interact positively during lessons, asking questions and providing appropriate contributions to class discussions. They demonstrate a willingness to work together to be successful in learning. However, in a minority of lessons, the pace of learning could be more challenging. Teachers should ensure a brisk and engaging pace throughout lesson input, tasks and activities. This should support children to be fully engaged in their learning.
- In most lessons teachers share the purpose of learning and how children would demonstrate success. Teachers should continue to develop opportunities for children to co-construct measures of success more routinely. This should help all children to know how to be successful in their learning and give them opportunities to lead learning.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions. They plan tasks that are well-matched to the individual needs of most children. They employ a variety of approaches, such as scaffolding learning, open ended tasks and access to a variety of supportive learning resources. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to elicit information, check children's understanding and build on children's responses. As a next step, teachers should now use questioning more effectively to support children in extending and deepening their learning. This includes developing higher-order thinking skills. Teachers should ensure that they meet the needs of all children, including those who require challenge in learning. They should use their knowledge of children's skills and ability to have higher expectations of what children can produce.
- In all lessons, teachers provide children with regular verbal feedback. They provide written feedback and use stampers to indicate areas of strength and improvements in literacy and numeracy jotters. The quality of feedback across the school is not yet of a consistently high quality. Children are not always able to articulate their next steps in learning. The headteacher should support teachers to ensure written feedback supports children better to understand their next steps and what they need to do to improve. In a minority of lessons, children have opportunities to self and peer assess their learning. For example, teachers use examples of children's work to model effective peer assessment and discuss success relating to the success criteria. Older children assess their own work in maths jotters. Children, however, are not yet skilled to understand confidently their role in self and peer assessment. Across the school, teachers should support children to develop better their skills in self and peer assessment.
- Teachers highlight the skills that children are developing as a class during lessons. They support children well to track these skills. Teachers have created 'Meta Skills In Action' displays across the school. This is supporting children better to understand the importance of developing skills for life, learning and work. Children are becoming more confident identifying the skills they are developing and linking these with their achievements. As planned, teachers should continue to embed this practice.

- Teachers at the early stages have engaged effectively with current research and local authority guidance to develop effective play-based approaches to learning and teaching. They have developed rich learning environments which promote an effective balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities. Teachers observe children carefully during their play and use their observations well to inform the ongoing development of the environment and play activities. For example, they provide activities to promote the application of early literacy and numeracy skills in a range of creative and relevant contexts. These contexts excite and engage learners very well. The headteacher and staff rightly recognise the importance of developing this effective approach throughout the school. They are developing effectively their 'inquiry learning cycle model.' This is supporting older children well to deepen and enrich their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers use digital technology well to support learning. For example, they use interactive screens to support whole class lessons. Children use laptops to research and present information. Younger children use programmable devices to enhance their learning in mathematics. Children have access to and use effectively assistive technology to support them in literacy.
- Children access rich, well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environments, including the wider area of the school community. Staff have developed strong links with the local community, for example, The Fintry Development Trust and the Community Council, to enhance children's learning experiences. Teachers provide opportunities for children to learn outdoors across all areas of the curriculum. Children talk positively about their experiences of learning outdoors and are keen to have more opportunities to learn beyond the classroom. Staff rightly recognise the need to continue to build on this positive outdoor practice. They should now consider how to support children further to build on their knowledge and skills as they move through the school.
- The headteacher and teachers have developed a useful planning, assessment and tracking protocol. This details clearly formative and summative assessment approaches. Teachers use this effectively to support children to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, attributes and capabilities in different contexts across the curriculum. This approach supports teachers' professional judgements and confidence in determining Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) attainment levels. With the support of the headteacher, teachers should now analyse assessment information better to ensure they provide appropriate support and challenge for all learners.
- Teachers across the school have regular, planned opportunities to discuss children's attainment. They have engaged in moderation activities in literacy and numeracy with colleagues beyond the school, including at cluster and local authority level. These activities support teachers well to have a clear understanding of gathering robust and reliable assessment evidence. They also support them to develop confidence in making professional judgements relating to national standards of attainment.
- All teachers plan effectively for children across a range of timescales. They use progression frameworks linked to CfE experiences and outcomes across all areas of the curriculum. This supports them well to ensure that children build on their prior learning appropriately. Teachers have created overviews of key learning which includes the development of skills, curricular areas and learning across different subjects and themes. This ensures children experience an appropriate breadth to their learning. Children would like more of a say in the contexts of their learning. The headteacher should continue to support staff to build further opportunities to enable children to have a greater choice in the curriculum experienced. This should encourage further children's motivation and engagement.

- Staff track individual children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. The headteacher meets with teachers four times per year to discuss all children's progress, including those with additional support needs. This helps them to identify children who require additional support in learning and provide appropriate literacy, numeracy and wellbeing interventions. The headteacher and teachers should now develop clear measures to evaluate more effectively the impact of these interventions. Where necessary, they should adapt or change interventions to meet better children's needs.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. At early and second levels attainment is very good. Across the school, a few children are capable of achieving more. Children who require additional support in their learning are making good progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English. A few children across the school are capable of achieving more.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children listen and respond to others appropriately and follow instructions well. They share their ideas enthusiastically and with confidence within small groups and whole class discussions. At first level, almost all children communicate effectively. They would benefit from further support to take turns and contribute appropriately when engaging with others for a range of purposes. At second level, almost all children build on the contributions of others well.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children recognise, say, and write individual and blended sounds. They use pictorial clues to retell familiar stories and predict what might happen next. They are enthusiastic about reading and storytelling. At first level, most children read aloud with expression. They share confidently their favourite author and reasons for their preference. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, almost all children show passion for reading and explain their preference for texts. They discuss the main ideas within a text with detail and answer a range of higher order questions.

Writing

- At early level, most children write simple sentences using capital letters, full stops, and spaces between words. They have good pencil control and form most letters legibly. They are beginning to apply their knowledge of sounds to spell words. At first level, most children use relevant and interesting vocabulary to entertain the reader. They demonstrate increasing understanding of sentence construction and link ideas in sentences. Children at first level would benefit from opportunities to write more independently. This should allow them to develop confidence in themselves as writers. Almost all children at second level use a range of punctuation and conjunctions effectively in their writing. They confidently use a range of literary techniques effectively, for example, onomatopoeia, personification and alliteration. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to write extended pieces of text.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children across the school are capable of achieving more.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all children at early level count accurately forwards and backwards in sequence. They complete mental calculations such as addition and subtraction confidently. At first level most children read, write and order numbers to 1000. They round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. A few children apply mental agility number skills accurately to calculate the total spent in a shopping situation and calculate change. At first level, children would benefit from revisiting aspects of numeracy and mathematics more regularly. Almost all children at second level, explain confidently the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers up to 1,000,000. They understand the equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children accurately identify and describe two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They understand and use correctly the language of position and direction. Most children at first level name accurately a range of simple 2D shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They are less confident when discussing the properties of shapes and objects. At second level, almost all children use mathematical language correctly to describe the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. They accurately identify lines of symmetry and create symmetrical images. They are confident in discussing, describing, and classifying angles using mathematical language.

Information handling

- At early level, most children use their counting skills to identify the most and least popular items on simple tables and bar graphs. They gather, and sort objects correctly based upon given criteria. They would benefit from further opportunities to interpret simple graphs and charts. At first level, most children understand different ways of gathering and displaying information appropriate to their level. At second level, almost all children extract information from pie charts and use this information to answer questions accurately. Children at first and second levels should continue to develop further their information handling skills through using digital technology to support their learning.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher and teachers gather and analyse a range of information regarding individual children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing over time. This information highlights that children's attainment over time at early and second levels is good. The headteacher should develop further approaches to analysing data for groups and cohorts of children. This should support her to identify trends and to measure the impact of school improvement initiatives on attainment better.
- Over time, children's attendance is consistently above the national average. Children are motivated in learning and want to attend school. Across all stages, very few children have an absence of 10% or more. The headteacher monitors closely the absence and lateness of individual children. She understands the reasons behind children's individual absences. Absences are mainly due to illness. The headteacher engages well with families to support them to improve attendance rates for a few children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their wide-ranging achievements in and out of school. Staff celebrate these at assemblies, on displays, and at the recently introduced 'OSCARS - Our School

Recognises and Celebrates Success.’ Staff work very effectively with parents and partners to offer a range of clubs and activities for all children to participate in during lunchtime and after school. These include football, netball, gardening and homework. The headteacher and staff discuss and track children’s achievements during termly business meetings. Staff encourage parents to share achievements from home. As planned, teachers should discuss with children the skills they are developing as a result of these experiences. This should support children to make better links between their achievements, learning and progress.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and their families well. They understand well the socio-economic context of the school. The headteacher uses pupil equity funding (PEF) to provide universal approaches to reading, writing, numeracy and mathematics. She also uses PEF to deliver a whole school approach to supporting children’s emotional wellbeing. The headteacher should now strengthen her approaches to identifying children who have barriers to learning as a result of socio-economic circumstances. She should target these funds more closely to improve the outcomes of children who experience barriers to learning. The headteacher should involve parents and children more fully in determining the focus of PEF to accelerate progress in closing poverty related attainment gaps.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher should continue to ensure that all children receive two hours of high quality physical education per week in line with national guidelines.
- Children across the school learn French progressively in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 language learning policy. Children also learn British Sign Language as part of the school's approach.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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.