

Summarised inspection findings

Gilmourton Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

5 November 2024

Key contextual information

Gilmourton Primary is situated approximately five miles from the town of Strathaven in South Lanarkshire. The school serves the rural district of Upper Avondale. It is non-denominational and covers stages P1 to P7. There are two multi-composite classes. The current roll is 41 children. The headteacher has shared responsibility for Gilmourton and another primary school and is supported by a principal teacher.

Gilmourton Primary is part of the Strathaven Learning Community. Almost all P7 children attend Strathaven Academy. Children attending P1 come from a variety of Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings across Strathaven and Upper Avondale.

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

- Senior leaders and staff have established fully a welcoming, nurturing ethos where all children are encouraged to try their best. They fulfil the first pledge of South Lanarkshire Council's Attachment Informed and Trauma Sensitive Practice strategy, 'act to make a difference'. Children's behaviour is good which is supported by staff who prioritise positive relationships across the school. There are supportive and inclusive relationships between staff and children and between children and their peers. This reflects staff's commitment to the importance and authenticity of Gilmourton Primary's values, and to be their 'natural best'.
- Teachers display class charters with children providing illustrations of how the charter and children's rights look in everyday life. Almost all children feel their views are taken into account and participate enthusiastically in leadership of learning groups. This results in them feeling valued and developing resilience and confidence in themselves as learners. Almost all children feel safe and secure in the school and all parents and carers feel their children are treated fairly and with respect.
- Most children are highly motivated to learn and the majority engage well with their learning. Teachers use effectively a range of active learning and teaching approaches. Children learn through a blend of whole class lessons and opportunities to work in groups or pairs with other children. This supports most children to extend further their levels and depth of engagement in learning. Staff value children's contributions and respond positively to encourage them in their learning. Most children respond to clear explanations and expectations from their teachers. Senior leaders and staff are embedding a strong reading culture across the school. 'Reading Ambassadors' and school-based incentives including 'Bookflix' result in children who are developing their engagement and motivation to read. As a result, children apply themselves well to the tasks they are set, demonstrating high levels of participation and engagement in reading.

- Staff's professional learning related to attachment, trauma awareness and relational approaches has improved learning environments where staff prioritise putting children at the centre. Most learning experiences are planned using differentiated approaches where learning intentions and effective success criteria are shared with children. This provides children with clear guidance on what they are learning and the steps they need to be successful. Children are involved regularly in self and peer-assessment, particularly in writing. Overall, teachers provide a variety of useful feedback to children on their learning. The headteacher supports teachers to identify and plan support for children who require additional support in their learning using staged intervention processes and documentation. Teachers need to develop further this requirement to identify and deliver plans that support children to maximise their potential. This will fulfil their statutory responsibilities and utilise fully their increasing knowledge as a result of professional learning.
- Most staff use questions well to check children's understanding and build on prior learning. They should now develop this further to include the use of higher order questioning and thinking time to scaffold, extend and challenge all children's learning. Older children need to develop further their ability to ask and answer a range of higher order thinking questions. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to embed the use of skills with children to deepen further their learning.
- Teachers refer to a 'Learning, Teaching and Assessment Position Statement'. This outlines expectations and a shared standard of learning and teaching across the Strathaven Learning Community. Senior leaders effectively support moderation of teaching approaches across local rural schools to ensure consistency of learning, progression and attainment for all children.
- Pupils' support workers support children skilfully to engage in their learning. They attend support strategy meetings with the headteacher and class teacher to review and plan for children's learning. This results in the effective use of a variety of approaches including visual timetables and strategies to prioritise wellbeing.
- Staff are developing successfully play based learning with children. Most children sustain concentration levels and engage well with the range of resources and opportunities to learn through play. There is an effective balance of adult-led and child-led learning across the school. Staff use national guidance to develop further their understanding and implementation of play pedagogy. Staff should evaluate regularly approaches and provision at key points in the year. This will help ensure they continue to build on successes and ensure outcomes for learners are consistently challenging.
- Staff and children use digital technologies well across the curriculum to enhance learning and teaching. For example, sharing videos and images to support writing. Children use devices to consolidate learning in numeracy and literacy. In addition, children who experience barriers to learning increasingly use digital assistive technology to access literacy learning experiences. This is still at the early stages as recently purchased technology is adapted to fully support children's needs. Staff are aware of the importance of technology and should take forward plans to introduce local authority skills progressions for digital skills and learning. This will better equip children to understand and manage their digital skills and enhance their learning further.
- Staff monitor and check children's progress in literacy and numeracy effectively using a range of summative assessments. All children have assessment and achievement records. Senior leaders and teachers use a recently introduced 'Teaching, Learning and Assessment calendar'. This is embedding more rigorous and reliable evidence to validate teacher professional judgements. Younger children have their skills observed during their learning, including their interpersonal and communication skills. Children discuss their skills linked to the

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) four capacities. This is based on a local authority skills framework to promote the importance of skills and their inclusion in the curriculum.

- The headteacher and teaching staff meet three times per year in tracking and progress meetings to discuss children's progress in learning. This supports teachers to increasingly identify effective strategies for children who require more challenge in their learning as well as those who need support. Most children are able to talk about their learning and enjoy being leaders of learning. Teachers from Gilmourton Primary School and schools within the Strathaven Learning Community evaluate and moderate professional judgements. Senior leaders should continue to use the national Benchmarks to improve further professional dialogue when moderating professional judgements.
- Staff plan over different timescales with recently streamlined planning systems. The systems are at the early stages and are more responsive to learners needs and provide greater breadth, depth and challenge. Staff include children's rights, Learning for Sustainability, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. This provides more opportunities for children to experiment, investigate, problem solve and work together as a team. The assessment overview ensures assessment is integral to planning and tracking. This should improve further the pace and breadth of curricular areas children experience. Teachers plan to explore and develop further approaches to planning to ensure consistently high-quality learning experiences 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Due to small numbers on the school roll and the risk of identifying individual children, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups. The improved use of data to identify gaps in learning for individual children is supporting more targeted interventions and improving outcomes. This takes into account how changes in cohort numbers can affect attainment figures.
- Overall, most children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing, talking and listening and numeracy. The majority of children experiencing barriers to learning are making good progress from prior learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children across the school are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Younger children are developing their ability to take turns when listening and talking. They follow and give simple instructions. Older children ask and answer questions thoughtfully. They express opinions related to topics and respect others' viewpoints. The majority of older children can listen to information and create new texts using appropriate words. They should continue to develop their use of skills to develop further their ability to engage with others in different topics.

Reading

- The majority of younger children are beginning to hear and say patterns of sounds in words accurately. Most younger children enjoy listening to stories, can identify the main characters and retell familiar stories in different ways. Most older children read with fluency and understanding, displaying an awareness of punctuation and the use of increasingly complex vocabulary. A few older children demonstrate a good understanding of more complex reading comprehension strategies. Children should continue to develop their use of inference and prediction skills. Older children can discuss favourite books and authors. They need to develop further their understanding of the purpose of a text and the features of language in non-fiction books.

Writing

- Most younger children know that writing conveys meaning. They would benefit from further play experiences to use writing to convey meaning and explore more environmental print. Older children are supported well to write imaginatively, recount their personal experiences and create text based on descriptions. They should continue to use tools to organise writing in a logical order. The majority of older children enjoy fantasy story writing and can write extended

pieces of writing which are presented well. They carefully consider their choice of vocabulary and experiment with words to ensure writing makes sense. Children should write for a broader range of real-life purposes using different writing genres.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good.

Number, money and measure

- Most younger children are confidently working with numbers up to 10 and a few beyond. They are developing their sense of size and amount. Children should continue their exploration of practical materials to support 'counting on and back'. Most older children are confident carrying out a range of calculations and using strategies to work out the answer. Older children have difficulty converting decimals to fractions and percentages. They would benefit from further work on solving real-life problems and explaining their choice of method.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children are developing well their ability to sort, describe and be creative with two-dimensional shapes. They increasingly use positional language as they take part in loose parts and block play and movement games. Children now need more opportunities to explore and understand the concept of symmetry. Most older children can name and identify the main features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. A few would benefit from more experience calculating the properties of a circle including radius, diameter and circumference. The majority of older children can discuss and clarify angles accurately. Children should develop further their knowledge of complementary angles and supplementary angles and use this knowledge to calculate missing angles. Older children would benefit from more opportunities to explore scale and interpret simple models, maps and plans.

Information handling

- Across all stages, children need to develop their skills and knowledge of information handling. They need a greater experience of collecting, organising and displaying data in a variety of ways. This includes the effective use of digital technologies to create surveys, tables, bar graphs, line graphs, simple pie charts and spreadsheets. Most children would benefit from opportunities to interpret and use data that influences their day to day lives.

Attainment over time

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and numeracy over time. The headteacher and staff use data increasingly effectively to plan specific interventions to close gaps and accelerate progress for all children. The headteacher supports teachers to take positive steps to address gaps in learning.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff praise and encourage children's achievements through celebrations of success at weekly assemblies and displaying photos on school displays. Children experience success in a wide variety of achievements through school sports participation events. These include cross country and tasters of various activities such as dance and basketball. Children also attend sports leaders festivals, a cycle training programme and Strathaven Gala. Parents contribute to 'snapshot' jotters, sharing achievements from home and commenting on summaries of learning experiences. This supports their understanding of their child's progress and how they can support them.
- Children would benefit from identifying the skills they are developing through their achievements and how they can apply them to other areas of their learning. Senior leaders should track and monitor these skills, make links to the CfE four capacities and build upon work

being undertaken using the South Lanarkshire skills framework. This will ensure that children are not at risk of missing out on opportunities as a consequence of the school's rurality. This will enable senior leaders to target support and experiences.

Equity for all learners

- Staff across the school have a good understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school community. They understand the demographics and unique rural context that the school operates within. As a result, they know the children and families very well and understand their learners' wellbeing needs. They place high importance on supporting the emotional and social needs of all children. Staff support equity through supporting families and communicating and collaborating with the community. Staff work closely with a wide variety of partners to reduce economic barriers to children fully participating in all aspects of learning. Staff are aware of the socio-economic environment children and families experience and the impact of the cost of the school day. Senior leaders and staff work effectively with the parent council to consider the costs of activities including school trips to reduce financial demands on families. Children have access to the process of Participatory Budgeting. They feel that their views matter and can influence decisions in school that affect them. Parents appreciate the wide range of communication from the school and the range of opportunities to be involved in the life of the school. For example, open learning sessions and parent workshops.
- The headteacher monitors children's attendance and is proactive when attendance levels give cause for concern. She contacts parents and carers to offer support to improve attendance and address concerns. Overall attendance is in line with the national average. There are a few children whose low attendance levels affect their progress in learning and attainment. This is being identified with increasing accuracy as processes develop to use data more accurately for individual children. Staff work well with colleagues from social work and health care partners to provide targeted support to reduce this barrier to learning. This leads to improved attendance for identified children. There have been no exclusions.
- The school does not receive any Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

Other relevant evidence

- Children receive their entitlement to two hours of quality PE each week.
- All children learn French and Spanish in alternate years, progressively from P1 to P7.
- All children have access to attractive and well-resourced library areas in a shared space outside the classrooms. This helps them to appreciate and value opportunities to read and develop skills in reading for enjoyment.

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.