Summarised inspection findings

St Patrick's Primary School (Shotts)

North Lanarkshire Council

17/09/2024.

Key contextual information

St Patrick's Primary School and Nursery Class is a denominational school, serving the town of Shotts in North Lanarkshire. The headteacher has been in post for nine years and is supported by two principal teachers. The school roll is currently 197, with nine classes from P1 to P7. Of the school roll, 26% of children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles one and two. The school currently has 25% of children who require additional support for their learning and 22% who are entitled to free school meals.

Attendance has been in line with the national average since 2020 and there have been no exclusions from 2022.

Despite significant staff absence and recent building upgrades, the management team have employed strategies to minimise impact on learning and teaching.

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

■ Relationships across St Patrick's Primary School are very positive. These are underpinned by the fully embedded values of Faith, Achieving, Included and Respect. Senior leaders and staff have worked together to provide positive, nurturing learning environments both in class and safe spaces around the school. Staff promote children's rights effectively and have worked with children to develop class charters. As a result, children support each other well and have a sense of belonging within their class.

■ Staff know their children well as learners and identify gaps in their learning quickly. In a majority of lessons learning is set at different levels of difficulty. Teachers use appropriate activities and tasks to meet the needs of most children. In most lessons, teachers use a range of resources and teaching approaches to motivate and engage children successfully. In these lessons, children have opportunities to develop their creativity and curiosity. In a few lessons, the learning is too teacher led and the pace of learning is too slow. As a result, children become distracted and disengaged from their learning.

■ In a majority of lessons, teachers use questioning well to engage children in their learning and to check for understanding. Teachers use skilful questioning as they develop children's mental agility in maths. Staff should continue to use a similar approach in the other curricular areas.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear instructions, explanations and share the purpose of the learning. This ensures that children understand what they are learning. As a next step staff should introduce skills into the planning and delivery of lessons. This will allow children to make connections between what they are learning and the skills they are developing. Children are not

always clear how they will be successful in class or what their next steps in learning are. Teachers should now develop further children's understanding of their progress and next steps in learning. This should include involving children in what success looks like.

- All children across all stages, have access to digital technology to support their learning. Most children demonstrate confidence in using digital devices to develop their skills in research, creating presentations and to support their learning. Staff should continue to provide a range of experiences for children to use digital technology in class. This will support children's independence to use digital technology to enhance their learning in different contexts.

- Teachers are at an early stage of implementing play pedagogy. As planned staff need to develop this further to ensure that children are experiencing well planned play activities. This should include careful consideration of the teacher's role in play and ensuring a balance of child led and adult led experiences. Staff have made a positive start to developing the learning environment to support play in a few classes.

- Staff engage informally in moderation activity with colleagues across the school. Senior leaders and teachers should now work together to develop this further. This should include a focus on progression in learning across stages to support children to build on what they already know. Teachers would welcome working with colleagues in other schools to continue to develop their confidence in making professional judgements about children's progress and attainment.

- Teachers use a variety of summative and formative assessments effectively to gather baseline data and to demonstrate children's progress. Teachers engage well in pace and progress meetings with senior leaders to identify children's next steps and interventions. In most classes, teachers use a variety of formative assessment techniques to support children's learning including peer and self-assessment.

- Staff are beginning to develop their use of high-quality assessments. Teachers use these to assess children's learning across a range of curricular areas. When used, these high-quality assessments help staff to assess children's application of learning across a range of contexts. This provides robust assessment evidence about children's progress. School leaders and teachers should work together to embed these assessments as part of the school's ongoing approaches to assessment.

- Most teachers provide timely verbal feedback to children about their learning. This helps children to make improvements in their work. In all classes, staff use praise and positive language to support children. A few teachers provide effective written feedback to help children improve the quality of their work. Senior leaders should now ensure all teachers provide high quality feedback to support children to achieve their personal targets. This will help children to make further progress across the curriculum.

- Most teachers use new progression pathways well to guide their planning across different timescales both long and short term. Teachers make good use of the progression pathways to plan for breadth, depth, and progression across the curriculum. Teachers use their knowledge of individual children's progress and needs well to inform planning, including providing opportunities for children to revisit and build on prior learning. They respond quickly to assessment information and adapt their plans and approaches to support children. Teachers are aware of the need to continue to review planning approaches to ensure greater consistency across the school. As part of this review, they need to ensure they make increased use of national Benchmarks to support their planning for assessment.

■ Senior leaders and staff have robust systems in place to track the continuous progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They review, analyse, and record all additional relevant information relating to every child. They monitor children's progress effectively as they move through the school. Senior leaders and staff reflect well on each child's journey of learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers participate enthusiastically in regular, well-focused tracking meetings with senior leaders. At these meetings, teachers discuss the individual progress of all children including those who face barriers to their learning. This approach is effective and is improving teachers' ability to analyse and use data purposefully. Teachers use assessment information well to support their judgements on children's attainment. The thorough and careful tracking and monitoring of children's progress and wellbeing needs is helping to raise attainment. Teachers should now track progress and attainment 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	**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 numeracy is good. Most children in P1, P4 and P7 achieve nationally expected levels of attainment in writing and numeracy. Most at P1 and almost all in P4 and 7 achieve nationally expected levels in listening and talking. Most children at P1 and P7 and almost all at P4 achieve nationally expected levels in reading.

■ Children who require additional support with their learning, make good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

■ Overall attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few are making very good progress.

Listening and talking

■ Across the school, most children follow instructions well, take turns and show respect for others' views. At early level, most children are keen to share their ideas and opinions. They now need to be encouraged to take turns when listening and talking to each other. Almost all children at first and second level show understanding of the main ideas of spoken texts by responding to and asking questions. At all levels children would benefit from opportunities to explore further techniques used to engage and influence the listener.

Reading

■ The school and class libraries provide access to a wide range of reading materials, including fiction and non-fiction books. These effectively support a culture of reading for pleasure and are improving reading outcomes for all children.

■ At early level, most children are confident using sounds, letters, and patterns to read words. At first level, almost all children identify their preferred styles of texts and authors. They are aware of the features of a book for example the blurb, illustrations, and cover. Children will now benefit from opportunities to use non-fiction books and develop their knowledge of the different features of these to locate information quickly. At second level, most children show an understanding of different types of text and can identify the purpose of a text. They respond well to a range of questions to demonstrate their understanding of a text. Children should now be given opportunities to assess how useful and reliable are different sources of information.

Writing

■ At early level, most children attempt to spell familiar words correctly. They use a capital letter and a full stop in at least one sentence. At first level, most children link sentences together using common conjunctions. Children would benefit from more opportunities to reflect upon the layout and structure of their writing. This will further develop their presentation skills and will support their writing to be clearer and more logical. At second level, most children use note taking effectively to support and organise their writing. Most children demonstrate an understanding of the features of different genres and apply these successfully in their own writing. As a next step, teachers should further support children to understand how strategies such as repetition and rhetorical questions are used to influence the reader.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

■ Children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

■ At early level, most children can confidently identify coins to £2. They recognise and count within 20 and have a growing awareness of halves and doubles to 20. A few children would benefit from further awareness of the key symbols for addition and subtraction. At first level, most children round numbers to nearest 10 and 100. They need to revisit strategies to support them to solve calculations involving two steps. At second level, most children simplify fractions and calculate fractions of a given number. They use percentages well to calculate profit and loss accurately. Children at second level need further support to help them to understand the differences between area and perimeter.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level, most children can use positional language to support their understanding of direction. At first level, most children recognise two dimensional shapes. They need to learn more about the use of angles and positional language to support their understanding of direction. At second level, most children use mathematical language to name and describe different types of angles such as acute and obtuse. They use co-ordinates effectively to locate points on a grid. Most children need to learn more about the properties of circles such as radius and diameter.

Information handling

■ At early level, most children use different properties such as colour and shape to match and sort items in different ways. At first level, most children are aware of the variety of ways to display data such as tally charts, Venn diagrams and bar graphs. They would benefit from learning more about the use of scales to represent different amounts on graphs. At second level, most children can describe ways to gather information and represent this in different ways. They use the language of probability well to describe the likelihood of events. They would benefit from learning about the use of technology to represent information such as spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

■ Most children make good progress over time in literacy and numeracy from their prior levels of attainment. Senior leaders and teachers have robust processes in place to track and record children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These processes ensure accurate and timeous recording of progress over time. Teachers' professional judgements are becoming more reliable as they become more confident in using national Benchmarks. Staff provide helpful, targeted support for children who need

support to overcome barriers to learning. This is supporting almost all children to make appropriate progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

■ Children's achievements both within and out with school are celebrated in a variety of ways for example, Star of the Week and weekly assemblies. Children talk positively about their engagement in whole school competitions and challenges. All pupils benefit from a wide range of school experiences, including the P6 Strathclyde Park Outdoor Week and the annual 'Parish Big Trips'. These experiences effectively build children's confidence and support further development of a range of skills such as teamwork, and social and communication skills. As identified by senior leaders, consideration should now be given to re-introducing certificated awards to support the application and development of key skills.

■ Most children feel that their opinions are valued and that they have made a positive difference to the school. Senior leaders should now focus on ensuring that children are more aware of the impact which the pupil leadership groups are having on school improvement.

■ All children have opportunities to develop further their skills through a variety of extra-curricular lunchtime clubs. Children in P5 and P6 also improve their skills in swimming as part of their health and wellbeing curriculum. These experiences are developing children's teamwork, leadership, and skills for life. As identified by senior leaders, the tracking of wider achievements should now be developed to evidence skills progression more clearly. This will better support children's awareness and understanding of them.

■ Children and staff benefit from the strong partnership working with the local parish, community groups and other partners. These partnerships provide valuable support to the school community. As a result, learning experiences and understanding about the world of work are enhanced across the curriculum for all children.

Equity for all learners

■ As a result of the strategic management of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), senior leaders are aware of their poverty related attainment gaps. The headteacher has a clear plan for the use of PEF. This includes additional staffing to reduce class sizes across all year groups and working with partner agencies to meet the needs of all children more appropriately. Across the school, children benefit from a range of support measures for social and emotional wellbeing. These include interventions to focus on building children's emotional resilience and self-regulation strategies. As a result, children are more able to discuss their emotions and use strategies that support their wellbeing. This supports all children well to be ready to learn and make progress in their learning.

■ All staff are aware of the socio-economic and emotional circumstances for individual children and families. Staff deliver targeted interventions for individuals and groups in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A few children benefit from attending support sessions including nurture and wellbeing, with partner agencies providing valuable support. This makes children feel more confident and more settled within their class. Senior leaders track children's involvement in targeted interventions. As planned, this tracking should now be developed further to show the impact of these interventions.

Other relevant evidence

St Patrick's Primary School have clearly identified their approaches to support reducing the cost of the school day for all families within their school policy, Poverty Proofing. Families are signposted and made aware of possible agencies and financial supports such as the Council's Food Poverty Referral Gateway which may be available to them if required. Children at P6 talk confidently and share their ideas regarding ways that the council could support families more such as giving every child a free school dinner.

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.