

Summarised inspection findings

Lamington Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

31 October 2023

Key contextual information

Lamington Primary is located in a remote rural setting serving the local community of Lamington. The catchment area also includes the village of Robertson and surrounding farms. The school is part of the Biggar Learning Community. A new school building was opened in 2014. It has two classrooms, a dining hall which is also used for physical education, and an open area. There are 10 pupils attending the school, ranging from P3-P7. They are taught as a single multi-stage class. The headteacher has overall responsibility for both Lamington Primary and Coulter Primary. A principal teacher, a class teacher and a few support staff work closely with the headteacher. Children and staff from both schools work regularly together. At the present time, the school does not receive Pupil Equity Funding.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

excellent

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

- Lamington Primary is a highly nurturing and caring school, where all children feel safe, respected and valued. Relationships between children and staff are extremely positive. This culture enhances learning as teachers thoughtfully balance care and challenge to help children build resilience and confidence. Children are very supportive of each other and through their daily actions demonstrate the school values of responsibility, caring, fairness, respect and honesty. The headteacher and staff have a deep commitment to children's rights and children understand the importance of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child. As a result of well-embedded approaches, children feel safe to take on new challenges and are empowered to lead their learning. All staff, families and the community work together very well to ensure highly effective nurturing, inclusive approaches across the life and work of the school. This supports all children to flourish.
- All children are highly motivated, attentive and engage fully in activities and lessons. They are actively involved in decision-making and can talk about changes they suggested which have impacted positively on school life. Children are particularly eager to share their learning, opinions and ideas with their school community and visitors. Teachers have a deep knowledge of the needs and personal interests of each child. They use this knowledge very well to plan creative learning activities that inspire children to experience wonder, curiosity and real-life challenge. Lessons often include an exciting opening event or stimulus to inspire and promote children's thinking. Staff create vibrant, engaging learning environments both indoors and outside. They make excellent use of these areas to offer activities and lessons in a range of inventive ways. For example, they use outdoor literacy spaces to increase reading for pleasure and child-created challenge zones, such as the 'night-line', to build children's teamwork and communication skills. Teachers regularly use features of nearby hills, woods, ponds and streams for science, maths and social studies lessons.

- Teachers consistently provide outstanding practice in teaching and learning. The headteacher with the teachers agreed a clear strategy for sustaining the highest quality provision for children. This is used regularly to inform and evaluate pedagogy. All staff use skills developed from professional learning to improve continually children's learning experiences. For example, they valued support which enhanced further their approaches to teaching writing and helped children to use more figurative and expressive language. Teachers regularly share and model their practice with colleagues in other schools to support others to reflect on and improve their practice. For example, in relation to teaching French and developing children's skills.
- Teachers use highly effective approaches to vary their teaching approaches and plan learning activities to meet the learning needs of all children within the multi-stage class. This includes strategies, such as setting challenges that start simply and facilitating children to apply more sophisticated concepts to complete them, and regularly adapting groupings and pairs to support or stretch children's learning. They make responsive interventions by tailoring questioning, materials and vocabulary very well. This ensures learning activities are at the right level of challenge and supports all children to deepen their knowledge and skills.
- All staff provide clear instruction and explanation enabling children to understand fully the purpose of their learning. Children articulate the skills they are developing and link these to life and the world of work. Teachers are highly skilled in using questioning and commentary that supports children to think critically, creatively and independently. Support staff are highly attuned to each child as an individual. They support children very well with both learning and wellbeing. Support staff provide valuable interventions which help children meet their individualised targets by practising key literacy and numeracy skills. This supports children to participate fully across the curriculum and make very good progress in their learning.
- Children confidently interact with a wide range of technologies independently to enhance their learning, such as apps and laptops. They regularly use digital collaborative tools to share their thinking. Teachers enhance learning experiences through skilled, integral use of technologies. These motivate, challenge and support children very well. For example, children video their own reading aloud and review the clip to help inform next steps in learning. Teachers are innovative, using digital methods to provide helpful feedback. Children's problem-solving and analytical skills are practised and extended, for example through coding and visual programming.
- Teachers and children plan learning in partnership. Children identify what and how they would like to learn across the curriculum. They set targets for their learning across a number of curricular areas and also for transferable skills. Staff support children to evaluate and review these regularly. As a result, children understand very well their progress and next steps in learning.
- Teachers plan and provide high-quality, open-ended, collaborative experiences which support children to explore and be creative. This includes imaginative play using water, sand and a diverse range of tactile materials. These experiences are responsive to children's interests and provide challenges matched to each individual's age and ability. All staff interact very well with children using thoughtful comments and questions. Children are motivated and supported to engage in learning experiences for extended periods through carefully selected interesting natural and multi-sensory materials.
- Teachers' use of the outdoor environment to stimulate, support and enhance children's learning is outstanding. Children regularly lead their own learning outdoors. For example,

children planned and created a 'story-orienteeing' course around the local area. They hosted many visitors, including families, community members and other primary school groups. Children learn to grow a range of fruit and vegetables in the school garden they have created. Catering staff help children to prepare these into healthy snacks. Staff make highly effective use of a nearby woodland 'classroom' and play areas. The principal teacher's outdoor practice has been shared across the local authority. In these spaces, children are highly engaged and develop deep knowledge across a broad curriculum. They develop transferable skills through well-planned activities covering themes, such as engineering, nature and sustainability. Children develop the qualities and attributes of responsible citizens and confident individuals by taking on leadership roles outdoors. This includes assessing risks, using tools responsibly, raising and caring for animals, and working with local community partners.

- The headteacher and teachers created a clearly structured assessment 'pathway' which guides practice. This ensures assessment of children's learning is integral to teachers' lesson planning and ensures children make the best possible progress in their learning. Children enjoy regular opportunities to peer and self-assess their work which they find supportive. Teachers provide encouraging feedback related to the lesson focus which supports children very well to understand their next steps. Staff use highly effective approaches to observe and assess children's progress in learning, in different contexts and across the curriculum. Working together, they skilfully analyse evidence from regular in-class assessments and standardised assessments. This supports accurate professional judgement on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels across the curriculum.
- Teachers engage regularly in collaborative, high-quality moderation activity with their partner school, other local schools and through regional improvement collaborative moderation processes. They regularly moderate their approaches to planning and assessment and share standards. The headteacher and teachers have a deep professional understanding of national standards.
- Teachers plan together very effectively which results in clear progression in learning across the curriculum. They make informed use of National Benchmarks when planning assessment. Teachers respond skilfully to their accurate assessment data and adapt their plans and approaches to support all children to make the best possible progress. The headteacher and staff use regular, focused meetings to rigorously track, monitor and discuss children's progress in all areas of the curriculum. They ensure that support and challenge fully meet all children's needs. The headteacher and staff review and calculate the added value interventions, approaches and planned experiences have on children's learning across the curriculum. The headteacher supports colleagues through an authority strategic tracking group.

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. Inspectors have identified good practice in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

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

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised of a small number of children in P3–P7. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in general statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- The majority of children exceed national CfE expectations in both literacy and numeracy. Children, who require additional support for their learning, make very good progress and are attaining very well for their individual levels of need. A majority of children transfer to Lamington Primary School during their primary education rather than starting in P1. These children make very strong progress from their prior learning when they join the school.

Attainment in literacy and English

Listening and talking

- Children are making very good progress with their listening and talking skills. All children take turns, contribute well to group discussions and build on others' responses. They ask relevant questions and can clarify and summarise their thinking. When hosting adult visitors and children visiting from other schools, they can clearly explain their work and confidently share ideas and opinions. Through plays, presentations and sharing learning sessions, children skilfully use a range of verbal and non-verbal techniques to engage their audience.

Reading

- All children are making very good progress with reading. Children who require additional support in literacy are exceeding their individualised targets. Recently, children worked together to increase reading for enjoyment across their wider community in meaningful ways, such as a 'pop-up book station' in a local café. As a result, children improved their skills of summarising and evaluating texts. Children have achieved a school National Book Trust Gold award for this work. All children are very motivated to explore books. They make regular use of creative 'book nooks' and special outdoor spaces to read and share opinions about their texts. As a result, children demonstrate well-embedded reading skills which enable them to achieve very well. All children can share their favourite authors and explain their reasons why. As a result of their work to create well-crafted book recommendations, which are displayed in Biggar library, community partners shared that children's reviews positively influenced book purchases and lending. As appropriate to their age and stage, all children read well with fluency and expression. All children accurately identify and creatively explore main ideas, setting and characters from their texts.

Writing

- Children are making very good progress in writing. As a result of focused improvement work, children have increased the range of texts they can talk about and create confidently. They discuss, identify and apply language structures and patterns that authors use and use them to further improve their own writing. Younger children use paragraphs and an increasing range of punctuation in their texts. Older children include ambitious vocabulary when writing imaginative stories and employ emotive figurative language very well. All children apply their writing skills with confidence across a wide genre, including reports, information texts, poetry and character descriptions.

Numeracy and mathematics

Number, money and measure

- Children are making very good progress across numeracy and mathematics. They show confidence when applying their understanding of concepts, such as place value. All children use their knowledge of number and measure well to provide reasonable estimates. They share their mathematical thinking and justify their choice of strategies during class and paired discussions. Younger children are increasingly confident using a wider range of strategies. Older children understand the relevance of their learning in numeracy and the link to skills for learning, life and work. They would benefit from further practice in applying their numeracy skills to financial education.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children name, identify and create an increasing range of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They recognise these shapes in different orientations, sizes and in nature. Older children demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between 3D objects and their nets through creative challenges.

Information handling

- Children collect information using tallies accurately. They interpret information on a growing range of charts and graphs and share their thinking. Children benefit from opportunities to apply their information handling skills in real-life contexts, such as a recent traffic survey. They ask considered questions to explore their thinking further.

Attainment over time

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved over time. Children make very strong, consistent progress in literacy, numeracy and across all curricular areas. The headteacher has robust processes for data analysis. She maintains a comprehensive overview of each child's attainment and progress that she uses very well to target and support the best possible outcomes for each individual. Collaborating with colleagues at Biggar High School, the headteacher follows children's progress and pathways into secondary education and beyond. She uses this information to inform future planning of the curriculum to continue to raise the attainment of all learners. Staff track and monitor added value for each child in all curricular areas over time. Across all national measures, the school consistently attains above their learning community and local authority CfE achievement of a level figures. Children's progress and attainment remained very strong throughout the pandemic and recovery period. Working together, staff use attainment and achievement information regularly to plan and evaluate their priorities. This includes rigorous monitoring of the progress of groups of children, such as gender and those receiving additional support. This information is used to target areas for further improvement, for example mathematical thinking and processes.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children contribute exceptionally well to the life of the school and wider community. They achieve across a broad range of skills through creative and meaningful opportunities. All children hold leadership roles, such as 'digi-champs', reading buddies and sports leaders. They are all members of the school's 'Pupil Parliament' playing an active role in planning and evaluating school improvement. This supports children to be confident, make decisions and value others. They are rightly proud of their valuable contributions to the life of the school.
- Staff plan residential trips for older children with other small schools which develop skills in independence, resilience and communication. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well through work with Active Schools partners. Staff equip older children with skills to work through challenges. For example, they plan and lead their own clubs for younger children, such as golf and table-tennis. This encourages resilience and creativity. Children participate in all available sporting opportunities across their local authority, including dance and rugby festivals, demonstrating determination and self-confidence. Children receive awards and achievements in sports outside of school, in areas such as running and martial arts. As a result of children's very high levels of participation and successes in extra-curricular and sports activities, the school achieved a sportscotland gold award very recently.
- Teachers and children track participation and skills in school clubs and outside activities. This allows school staff to identify any gaps and support all children to succeed. Children describe the attributes and skills they develop through participation in achievement activities. They use their reflections well as they set and evaluate their learning targets. Staff recognise and celebrate children's successes and achievements in and out of school through a wide range of effective approaches. The imaginative 'Lamington Achievement Adventure lanyard' approach is highly successful and children and families value this recognition.

Equity for all learners

- Ensuring equity of experience and social inclusion is a strength of the whole school community's work and their approaches are highly commendable. The headteacher and all staff are passionate about providing activities and experiences to overcome challenges faced by children and families in rural communities. This includes tackling issues such as the cost of fuel, transport availability, increased travel times and social isolation. Parents find the range of lunchtime extra-curricular clubs a highly beneficial support. Teachers plan for children to regularly participate in shared learning activities, visit other schools and host visitors. These experiences support children's confidence helping to build strong friendships and connections across the learning community and beyond. Staff arrange 'familiarisation' excursions to large, busy places and other new experiences outwith children's own local lived experiences. These help children to grow in self-confidence, independence and resilience.
- The headteacher has a deep understanding of the school's rural and socio-economic context. She is dedicated to tackling the 'cost of the school day' and prepares a clear and detailed strategic plan. This inspires all school staff to ensure this is integral across their work. They break down financial barriers to education exceptionally well. This includes transformative initiatives such as a community swap shop, sharing produce from the school garden and free annual school photographs for families. Staff successfully source grants and funding to remove costs of travel and resources. Children have a growing understanding of the cost of living. Recently, they took on a highly creative 'staycation' challenge. They planned and visited a range of summer excursions at very low or no cost. All children wrote reviews, including tips to reduce costs further, and produced a brochure for families and the community. School staff make very good use of the school app and social media to signpost free activities, entitlements

and financial support available for families. Parents deeply appreciate the school's ethos and strategy to ensure equity. They value collaborative working to plan and make changes, and the high-quality information they receive. The headteacher shares her school's work and supports other headteachers to develop their approaches to equity through her 'Lead Headteacher' role.

Other relevant evidence

- Staff plan and ensure strong collaborative working with parents, a wide range of partners and community groups. This enhances the work of the school across the curriculum. These connections are highly valuable to the staff's approach to integrate skills development and prepare children for future pathways and the world of work. They align this work very well to 'Developing the Young Workforce' and the Career Education Standards.
- Children receive their full entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education each week. Teachers make very good use of indoor and outdoor spaces to deliver a progressive, engaging programme of physical education. All children receive swimming lessons. This is planned and prioritised due to the school's location near rivers and wild swimming spots.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The headteacher ensures that the school's ongoing self-evaluation journey is led and strongly influenced by children, staff, families and partners. This provides a rich and meaningful context for learning. This year, children are further involved in self-evaluation through Biggar Learning Community's project 'Young Leaders of Learning'. Staff support children to select and evaluate the quality of learning experiences. Using the information gathered, they are working closely together to further refine the school's curriculum. This regular, embedded learner participation supports the school's culture and ethos of children's rights and ensures all children's voices are heard. Staff and children demonstrate strong skills in reflection and they share their informed views to affect positive change. The headteacher supports senior leaders across the local authority and beyond in the effective use of school self-evaluation to secure improvement and sustain high-quality learning and teaching.
- There are highly effective, embedded approaches to support children's transition from their small, rural primary school to Biggar High School. Senior leaders and staff plan structured, well-considered primary/secondary experiences for all children across a wide range of curricular areas spanning several years. This includes secondary staff teaching in the primary school and a three-day transition visit for children to Biggar High School. The 'Mission Transition' profile supports children well to reflect on and share their strengths and aspirations. Staff across the schools work very closely together to discuss children's achievements and successful ways of working. Children with additional support needs receive well-planned enhanced arrangements. Overall, these approaches support all children to continue to make strong progress and remain confident throughout their transition to secondary education.
- The whole school community's approaches to ensuring equity of opportunity and experience for children in a small, rural school are innovative and extensive. All staff, parents, children and partners work together very well to minimise and overcome the unique challenges faced by communities in remote rural areas in creative and effective ways. This is significantly enhancing children and families' experiences, friendships and wellbeing, and minimising or removing school-related costs.
- School staff have strong practice in child protection and safeguarding procedures. For example, the headteacher created informative visuals for parents to promote children's attendance at school. Staff use these well, along with further supports, to increase and sustain individuals' attendance and the school's overall average figures. This practice has been shared with schools across the local authority. For outdoor learning and local environment experiences, staff use comprehensive risk-assessments and have developed rigorous processes for review and action. Children leading and taking increasing ownership of this work is an effective feature of the school's practice.

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.