

Summarised inspection findings

Drumpark Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

6 June 2023

Key contextual information

Drumpark Primary School is a non-denominational local authority special school situated in Coatbridge. The school supports primary aged children who have a range and complexity of additional support needs from across North Lanarkshire Council. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 154 children across 18 classes ranging from P1 to P7. The school is situated in a refurbished campus. The school shares the campus with Greenhill Primary School.

The leadership team comprises of a headteacher, depute headteacher and three principal teachers. There was a vacancy for one principal teacher at the time of inspection. 44% of children reside in Scottish Index of Multi Deprivation (SIMD) decile 1 and decile 2.

The school roll increased significantly in August 2022. A number of children transitioned into the school following the closure of the primary department of a neighbouring special school. A number of new staff also joined the school at this time. The school has experienced high levels of staff absence in the last year which has impacted negatively upon school improvement priorities.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher works closely with children, parents and staff to agree and shape the school's visions and values. The vision and values take full account of the school community and are underpinned by children's rights. The values are relevant to the school context and displayed prominently throughout the school. Staff have developed an engaging 'visions and values' song and produced bright, meaningful visuals which are prominent across the school. This is supporting children to engage with the values and recognise and understand in their own way how the values relate to themselves. The headteacher should now revisit and refresh the vision, values and aims to ensure all learners' needs and aspirations continue to influence the work of the school.
- The headteacher and depute headteacher are well respected and valued members of the school community. They provide effective leadership across the school. In leading the school through periods of significant change, senior leaders have a clear sense of direction and are managing the pace of school improvement well. Senior leaders have developed an appropriate focused improvement plan and quality assurance procedures that take account of school and cluster priorities. Senior leaders have overcome challenges, such as staff absence, and continued to undertake most of the planned quality assurance activities. Senior leaders have well established approaches in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. This includes analysing and monitoring children's attainment and progress and carrying out a range of activities to examine the quality of learning and teaching. Senior leaders should continue to develop their strategic approaches to analysing information

including using data to help monitor school performance. This will help determine if school improvement priorities are leading to better outcomes for children.

- Senior leaders provide a range of appropriate opportunities for teachers and staff to take on leadership roles, participate in school improvement activities and develop further their professional enquiry. Senior leaders and staff identify and agree on useful areas of enquiry and school improvement through professional review and development discussions. Senior leaders, with the support of staff, have begun to develop a bespoke additional support needs (ASN) tool kit and the “Drumpark professional learning community”. This newly established forum is beginning to support staff well to engage in meaningful enquiry and research-based learning. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff to measure and monitor the overall impact of new initiatives and changes to practice. This will help ensure that staff gain a greater understanding as to whether changes are leading to improved outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders provide regular opportunities for children, staff, parents and partners to offer their views on the school’s strengths and areas for improvement. They should continue to develop further opportunities for children, parents and partners to contribute to improvement planning and evaluating school initiatives. The school has a valued and active Parent Council who work well to support the school. Parent Council representatives provide a range of supports to children and parents through fundraising events. They also signpost parents to helpful community links and information via an online platform.
- Across the school, all children have opportunities to experience and take on leadership roles through pupil action groups. Through participating in pupil action groups, children are contributing very well to school improvement. Children are proud to take on leadership roles that help them develop skills for learning and life, such as road safety. They are supported well by staff to prepare and share information to the school community at assemblies and at whole school events. Children identify and share positive changes they have made to the school, such as choosing fair trade products and improving people's knowledge of fair trade items. Most children feel the school listens to their views. Senior leaders should continue to help all children understand how their views are taken into account and the actions the school takes as a result. This will support better children’s ability to see clearly how they influence school improvement.
- The headteacher and staff understand the school's social, economic and cultural context well. Staff are aware of the potential barriers to learning children face. They understand well the increased challenges around poverty caused by the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Staff are beginning to identify effectively gaps in children's learning and understand their role in raising attainment and in helping children overcome any barriers to learning.
- Senior leaders have a strategic plan in place for how they use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) that targets identified children’s literacy, numeracy and wellbeing needs. PEF initiatives have been adversely affected by staff absence in the last year. Senior leaders and staff need to ensure that they continue to maintain a focus on improving the attainment and progress of identified children. In doing so, they should develop further ways to monitor systematically the impact of PEF initiatives on children’s attainment and progress.

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 create a culture and ethos which is child-centred and reflects a very strong commitment to children's rights. School values are evident in practice across the school. Staff support learners effectively to understand these values through a range of activities such as assemblies, group discussions and pupil action groups. Most children confidently discuss and articulate their rights, giving examples.
- Almost all staff work in a caring and nurturing way across the school. Senior leaders and staff enjoy high quality relationships with children. Staff ensure that children's medical needs are sensitively and respectfully supported. They also help children to develop their social skills and be respectful of all members of the community. As a result, children display positive peer relationships. Learners are also able to describe kindness and respect for all, for example how to support refugees in the community.
- Staff work effectively to develop a positive classroom culture. They use a range of approaches such as sensory circuits and movement breaks to help children remain on task. Staff support children well to understand their emotions and self-regulate. As a result, almost all children are succeeding within the classroom setting. Staff support a few children who experience dysregulation within a classroom setting by providing high quality personalised bespoke learning programmes. This is enabling these children to engage more fully with their learning. Staff should now continue to support these children to reengage successfully in learning with their peer groups as part of their continuing learning programme.
- Staff provide classroom environments and shared areas which are bright, welcoming and stimulating. Children's learning is evident in displays across the school. Most learners can discuss aspects of their learning when asked. Staff ensure the learning environment across classes is consistently calm and conducive for learning. Most children engage in purposeful learning at all times throughout the day. Staff provide clear and predictable routines. Staff support learners well to cope with transitions using a range of useful aids including visual timetables, visual supports, song signifiers, rhythm and on body touch.
- Almost all additional support need assistants (ASNAs) and enhanced support assistants (ESAs) are skilled at helping meet children's needs. In the majority of classes, they work collaboratively with teachers and provide effective one to one and small group support for children. In a minority of classes, ASNAs and ESAs could be deployed more effectively to support learners to engage fully in learning activities.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about getting it right for learners and provide consistently high quality, enjoyable learning experiences which are motivating for most learners. Most children engage purposefully in activities that suit their needs. They work well in group and individual tasks and activities. In a few lessons, children find their learning activities to be too easy or too

difficult, resulting in them becoming disengaged. Teachers need to ensure that all learning activities are differentiated appropriately and provide sufficient challenge to meet the learning needs of all children. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of children's individual developmental needs particularly those learners who find attention to task more difficult. This will help ensure that learning activities are pitched at the right level for all children.

- Almost all teachers have high expectations of children and promote independence in learning. Most teachers use questioning effectively to engage children in rich learning experiences where children are able to make choices in learning. In a minority of lessons, learning can be overly teacher led. As a result, children can become passive learners, resulting in missed opportunities for children to lead their learning and be more active contributors.
- In a minority of classes, teachers use digital technologies effectively to develop learner's skills. Most teachers are utilising outdoor spaces to enrich learning experiences. Children enjoy participating in learning outdoors and using digital technology. Teachers should continue to develop their use of digital technologies and outdoor spaces to enhance children's learning experiences.
- Staff are developing their approaches to learning through play. In most classes children are provided with a range of resources which offer opportunities for play-based learning. Most children have regular access to play activities. As a result, children are beginning to explore, discover, and problem solve in more playful ways. They are developing social skills, turn-taking and communication skills through their participation in play activities. Staff should continue to develop approaches to play across the school, taking account of national guidance to strengthen this work further.
- Teachers use a range of planning and assessment approaches which are effective in tracking progress for the majority of learners. Teachers adapt local authority planners to ensure they meet better the needs of all learners. Most teachers differentiate this planning well based on the learning needs of learners. A majority of teachers can identify clearly where a learner is working at in relation to milestones and benchmarks. This results in most learners participating in appropriate learning tasks in class. Supported by senior leaders, teachers need to continue to develop their approaches to assessment and planning.
- Teachers track children's progress at key points during the year and during 'assessment weeks' effectively. GifMe plans are reviewed termly which allows staff to track and discuss progress in both wellbeing and learning. A majority of teachers use Golden Goals booklets well to plan appropriate individual targets for children linked to wellbeing and the development of skills.
- Moderation processes are at an early stage of development. Senior leaders need to programme more moderation activities both internally and with neighbouring schools to help ensure teachers' have a shared understanding of standards.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Overall, teachers provide a curriculum that takes account of the needs of children with complex additional support needs. Teachers and support staff are fully aware of children's stages of development and have a good understanding of the small steps children achieve in their learning.
- Teachers work well to develop a broad curriculum using milestones for complex learning needs and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. This allows children to build on their experiences as they move through the school.
- Teachers plan opportunities that support children's progress in a majority of curriculum areas across a three-year period. This ensures coverage of all CfE experiences and outcomes across all curriculum areas. Teachers are at the early stages of developing learning pathways for all curriculum areas to support children further in raising their attainment. Teachers should build upon this positive start and ensure learning pathways are relevant to the needs of all learners.
- Children currently receive around 90 minutes of quality physical education (PE) per week from a specialist PE teacher. The PE teacher provides well planned and progressive physical education and makes very good use of the school hall, swimming pool and outdoor spaces. Teachers work well to encourage children to participate in activities designed to increase physical wellbeing. Senior leaders should now work with staff to ensure all children receive their full entitlement of two hours quality PE planned around progression pathways.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents and community partners hold senior leaders and staff in high regard. They believe that senior leaders and staff are kind, caring, approachable and very supportive of children and families. Parents report that their children are safe, happy and enjoy attending school. Parents value the daily feedback on their children's progress and achievements via a digital platform. A few parents would welcome more information on their child's learning and planned next steps. A minority of parents are regular visitors to the school and appreciate the welcoming environment staff provide. As planned, senior leaders and staff now need to continue to develop further ways to involve parents in their child's learning.
- The school has an active Parent Council which focuses on fund raising activities and also contributes to the school's improvement plan. Parent Council members feel that their opinions and views are sought and valued.

2.1 Safeguarding

- 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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Staff across the school adopt highly effective approaches to understand the needs of children. This is having a meaningful impact on almost all children's wellbeing. Almost all staff work well to identify and support the range of complex additional support needs of almost all children. Children have regular contact with adults who they have developed meaningful and supportive relationships with. Almost all children feel safe and let adults know when they need help, accepting the support offered. Children contribute positively to create a kind and caring school. Overall, they feel they belong to an inclusive and diverse school community. Almost all children experience high levels of inclusion when in school.
- Almost all children, appropriate to their additional support needs, have developed their understanding of wellbeing very well. Children communicate confidently about how they can improve their own wellbeing and how they can support other children with their wellbeing. They have a strong understanding of their rights and work very well to promote the rights of all children at the school. Children's understanding of wellbeing and rights is helping them seek and build friendships, show kindness and be tolerant towards others.
- As part of the school's approach to health and wellbeing, almost all children engage in daily active and healthy experiences. This is helping children to understand healthier food choices and increase their participation in physical activity. Children enjoy activities linked to health and wellbeing which is developing well their motivation and confidence to take part in a range of new physical activities.
- A few children access more intensive support and engage well with interventions designed to support their mental health and wellbeing. For example, the school 'drawing and talking' initiative is helping children organise their thoughts and explore ways that they can relax. Children who access the hub experience enhanced levels of nurture. This is helping them develop resilience to cope with any challenges they may face. As a result, almost all of the children accessing support in the hub are calmly accessing learning opportunities and activities. A few children work individually with a staff member across the school week. They are supported well to settle and reengage with their programmes of learning. Staff should continue to review these approaches regularly to ensure that children working on their own continue to develop their cooperative skills and cope with change. Staff support children who have experienced loss or bereavement well. This is helping children understand the complexity of life and build strategies to cope with adversity.
- Senior leaders and staff have an appropriate understanding of statutory duties and codes of practice which is leading to most children having their needs planned for very well. Senior leaders work effectively with partners to consider whether children meet the criteria for a coordinated support plan.

- Senior leaders plan to hold an annual review to consider each child's additional support needs and how the school, in partnership with other appropriate agencies, can support them. Senior leaders should continue to explore approaches to ensure all annual reviews take place timeously. They should also continue to consider how they can increase ways that parents participate fully in setting targets and outcomes for their child.
- All children benefit greatly from individualised planning that considers well their strengths and areas for development. Staff work effectively with children to ensure they contribute meaningfully to their individualised plans using their preferred method of communication. Senior leaders and staff appropriately seek parent's views on targeted outcomes across the year.
- Children's attendance is in line with national averages for the special needs sector. There are no recorded exclusions. This demonstrates very well the school's inclusive approach and how staff work purposefully to meet children's additional support needs. Senior leaders should continue with bespoke plans to support identified children and families with barriers to learning which impact on school attendance.
- Staff receive annual training in key areas such as safeguarding and child protection, equality and diversity. Senior leaders ensure that they work well with appropriate agencies to prepare plans for children who meet the criteria for a coordinated support plan. As a result, children benefit from clear plans with joint working between education and appropriate agencies. Senior leaders should now strengthen their use of chronologies in line with local and national guidance. They need to ensure all chronologies are kept up to date and note outcomes of any actions agencies have taken.
- The local authority submitted self-evaluation 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. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school health promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and local authority.
- Children participate and contribute effectively to activities and events within the school community. Most children are developing well important skills that will help them be more independent as they grow. Children across the school understand diversity and are supportive of others. They learn effectively about the needs, faiths and cultures of others through religious education programmes and religious observance. They talk very positively and enquire about what makes everyone unique and special. Children recognise that they can contribute effectively to the community. As a result, children participate actively in the life and work of the school and promote a welcoming school environment.

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

- Taking account of individual learner profiles, most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. A minority of learners are making significant progress since returning to in-school learning following the pandemic. A few learners need to be challenged appropriately with their learning in order to achieve more.

Attainment in literacy and English

Listening and talking

- Most children are developing well their listening and talking skills, showing progress from prior levels. Most children working at foundational milestones give shared attention to a range of sensory stimulus, objects, and people. They participate in short communication exchanges using preferred methods of communication. Most children working at the early stages of milestones generate vocalisations and respond to familiar routines. Children working at the upper levels of milestones demonstrate an awareness of others by turn taking and using symbols or words to communicate. A minority of children working at early level join in with conversations using preferred modes of communication. They recount stories using a simple sequence to retell a story. Most children would benefit from staff having a more consistent approach to the development of communication strategies. This will ensure that all children are able to participate in communication exchanges and conversations using their preferred methods of communication. Senior leaders and partners should support staff to develop greater consistency of total communication approaches. This includes the development of alternative and augmentative communication to meet better the communication needs of all learners.

Reading

- Most children are beginning to develop their pre-reading and reading skills and are able to show progress from prior levels. Most children working at milestones show an interest and respond to familiar characters, songs and rhymes. A few children make simple choices between familiar sensory stories and texts. Children working at the upper levels of milestones into early explore a storybook or text to find and match objects and pictures. At early level, most children retell familiar stories in different ways, for example, through drawing. At early into first level, most children use knowledge of sight vocabulary and tricky words to read words in context. Children read aloud, taking account of simple punctuation and beginning to read with more fluency and expression. They understand stories, can answer questions and contribute to discussions about events, characters and ideas to help consolidate their reading skills. Although children visit the local and school-based library, they would benefit from having greater access to a wider range of texts and genres. This should include extending the range of texts children use in their learning.

Writing

- Most children are developing their fine motor, prewriting and writing skills, showing progress from prior levels. Most children at foundation milestones use their hands to explore and manipulate objects, for example engaging in tactile activities during play. Most children working at the milestones hold, grasp and use a variety of tools for writing and demonstrate control of their preferred tool for writing. They create simple patterns and sequences with the required support. A few children at the upper levels of milestones overwrite prewritten words. They copy and make drawings. At early level, most children are able to form letters and write simple sentences. At first level, most children write more extended pieces, such as news articles, using punctuation and common conjunctions. Most children at the upper levels of milestones and early level need to focus more on organising and using information in writing. At early into first level, children should engage more with reference sources such as dictionaries and word mats to help spell unfamiliar words.

Numeracy and mathematics

Number, money and measure

- Most children working at the early stages of milestones demonstrate an awareness of numbers that come next in a familiar sequence. Most children working at early level independently sequence numbers forward up to 20. They perform additions and subtractions using single and double-digit numbers. At early into first level, a majority of children use a range of times tables to perform multiplications and calculate divisions. Children working at the upper levels of milestones sort coins from a range of coins. Most children working at early level identify the value of coins and use these to calculate the cost of items they might purchase. Children are able to identify and sort coins of different value. At all levels, children understand the sequence of events through practical activities such as following visual daily timetables. At early into first level, most children use mathematical language confidently to explain number processes and enjoy practising mathematical skills through active learning. Children are not as confident in using units of measurement.

Shape, position and movement

- At all stages, children enjoy taking part in learning activities that develop the use of positional language and concepts of movement, position, strength, speed and direction. Most children working at early level are investigating well the properties of two-dimensional shapes, recognising their properties.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children match and sort items by colour, size and shape. Most children identify and collate data, representing it in simple charts and through the use of tally marks. Most children working at first level interpret information correctly from bar graphs. Children need more opportunities to develop and extend their information handling skills further using digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders and staff provided data and supporting evidence which illustrates clearly that most children are making good progress with their learning, engagement and wellbeing over time. A minority of learners have attained very well over time especially when taking account of the challenges of the pandemic.
- Senior leaders and staff now need to ensure the assessment and tracking of children's progress over time is more robust, streamlining existing approaches where appropriate. Teachers should engage in more moderation activities to improve their confidence in making professional judgements of children's attainment and progress. Staff need to continue to work

with others to moderate their practice and set standards for learning which provide all children with appropriate challenge.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated effectively at assemblies, in newsletters and through the use of digital platforms. Children's achievements are displayed prominently across the school. Children are very proud of their achievements including being 'Shining Stars'.
- Almost all children experience success through their participation in a wide range of pupil action groups. They are developing their skills in citizenship, sustainability, communication and working with others. Children speak very well about how their achievements are aligned closely to their rights and school values. Staff should now support children to recognise the skills they are developing through their personal achievements more effectively.
- Children are achieving well through participation in expressive arts learning activities. In art, children are successfully using a range of resources and techniques to produce pieces of artwork. They are developing their fine motor skills using a range of tools effectively. In music, children working at early level are playing a variety of instruments.
- Children gain accreditation and awards for many of their achievements. They have worked well in partnership with children in Greenhill Primary School to gain awards for sustainability and taking forward children's rights. A minority of children are working towards individual awards including the John Muir Award. Staff should continue to identify ways to accredit children's personal achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of the complex additional support needs and socio-economic background of children and families. They know the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation profile of learners. Staff provide targeted, equitable support to help alleviate any challenges faced by children and families. This is beginning to help children affected by the poverty attainment gap to achieve more. Senior leaders have used PEF to develop targeted interventions for identified learners, including bespoke personalised programmes. Senior leaders now need to measure the impact of PEF initiatives to determine whether they are contributing to improved outcomes for children.

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.