

Summarised inspection findings

Westerton Primary School

East Dunbartonshire Council

29 November 2022

Key contextual information

Westerton Primary School is situated in a residential area of Bearsden, East Dunbartonshire. The catchment consists of mostly private housing. At the time of inspection there are 298 pupils on the school roll, across 11 classes. A breakfast club and after school club are also located within the school premises, although these provisions are run by private providers.

The majority of pupils attending the school live within SIMD index range from decile 5 to 9, along with less than 10% of pupils living in SIMD 1 and 2. There have been significant changes of headteacher at the school over the last seven years. At the time of the inspection, an acting headteacher is in place, who has been in the school for eight months.

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

- All at Westerton Primary School are committed to ensuring that high standards and success are achieved for all learners. Shared vision, values and aims were created in recent years which underpin the life and work of the school. The acting headteacher and staff have rightly identified the need to update the vision, values and aims in line with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and their rights-based learning work. This includes plans to review the curriculum rationale. We agree with these important areas of focus, both of which are key to continuous improvement at Westerton Primary School.
- Staff have consulted with stakeholders to create their own behaviour expectations and key areas of being ready, being safe and being respectful. Classroom charters support these behaviour blueprints and expectations in each class, along with school assemblies, learning conversations and class discussions. Children are very proud of their school. They understand and can articulate the school values well. Staff have used the school's vision, values and expectations well to support children's wellbeing. This includes through continuity of learning throughout the pandemic, resulting in an increasing focus on nurture.
- The school has gone through a period of changing leadership over recent years, which has impacted on leadership of change. The acting headteacher provides strong leadership. In a short period of time in post, she has developed a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Whilst having a clear drive and vision, she is aware that there are key areas for development, along with the need to implement changes at an appropriate pace. Examples of areas of development include focusing on aspects of reading, writing and refreshing the curriculum as planned. Supported by the very effective depute headteacher and principal teacher, the senior leadership team set a positive tone and lead by example. Together, they have created a calm and nurturing school climate, where expectations are high. Along with staff, senior leaders maintain an outward looking focus and foster strong partnership working to maximise rich learning opportunities for children. All in the school community hold the senior leadership team in very high regard and appreciate their clear, kind

and supportive leadership style. Senior leaders are aware of the need to embed fully the identified areas of change into sustainable practice.

- Leadership at all levels is clearly valued throughout the school. Staff feel supported and encouraged to take forward new developments and initiatives, including through helpful discussions at their professional review and development. Almost all staff, including support staff, undertake aspects of leadership roles, which are resulting in enhancing positive outcomes for children. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school. Staff report their own vision for “one team, one dream”. The approach to professional learning promotes this teamwork, for example through the recent “Improving our School” programme. We agree with plans to continue to embed practitioner enquiry opportunities to support sound pedagogical practice. Staff appreciate sharing practice with each other, which supports extending skills and confidence, including with those newer to the school. Staff look forward to reviving more opportunities for linking with other schools, including through moderation of practice. A next step would be to review leadership roles, for example linking all aspects of literacy. In order to achieve continuous improvement, all staff should continue to fully evaluate the impact of every change, including through individual leadership roles. This includes the identified need to develop a strategic overview of professional learning across the school.
- All staff value the support they have received from their colleagues throughout the pandemic, including a key focus on their own wellbeing.
- Pupil voice and participation is promoted well in the school. Children have opportunities to contribute confidently to improvement as part of their representation on a wide variety of pupil committees. Children are also developing their leadership roles effectively, through, for example, the junior leadership team or Fairtrade committee. A significant minority of children are unsure if their views are taken into account. We agree with staff plans to explore further ways in which children can support school improvement, for example, making use of “How good is our school?”. Senior leaders could use this as an important tool to help achieve continuous high expectations in learning and teaching. This could also be used to communicate to children more effectively how their views are being taken into account and resulting improvements.
- Parents and partners support improvements across the school effectively. The school is highly respected in the local community. Almost all parents report that they are satisfied with the work of the school. The Parent Council and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) helpfully support different aspects of school life. The majority of parents feel that the school takes their views into account when making changes. The Parent Council is involved in consultation, for example, in the school improvement plan. There is scope to increase further the role of the Parent Council and parental involvement in school improvement. This includes the need to review how parents know that their views are taken into account.
- The acting headteacher and senior leaders have developed effective strategic approaches for planning school improvement. Together, senior leaders have carefully identified key priorities to address the impact the pandemic has had on children’s wellbeing and progress in learning. As recognised by senior leaders, it will be important to continue with more formal classroom observations and extend learning discussions with staff. Discussions with staff can explore how data is fully used to inform learning and teaching to support and challenge individuals. This will support measuring the impact of new approaches on improvement and recovery and maintaining high standards.
- The acting headteacher and staff have a very good understanding of the school’s social, economic and cultural context. They are aware of the increased challenges around poverty caused by the pandemic, attainment gaps, the cost of living crisis and the cost of the school

day. Senior leaders utilise the allocation of Pupil Equity Funding the school receives effectively. This includes through targeted support and additional staffing, all of which is supporting individuals and groups of learners to achieve well.

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

- Across the school there is a positive, calm, and inclusive ethos. This is supported by a nurturing and caring environment where staff show a commitment to children's welfare and development. There are strong relationships between teachers and children, and amongst children themselves. Most children enjoy learning at school and are well behaved and friendly. They feel their teachers are supporting them in their learning. The school's strong values are referenced across several classes during learning and teaching. Children can make reference to these during learning and play. As identified, this can now be further enhanced by developing a curriculum rationale which reflects all learning opportunities. Children are happy and confident in class. They are motivated and readily participate in their learning experiences. Almost all children work well individually, as pairs and in groups, and enjoy their tasks. Children who require additional help with their learning are supported very well by a range of adults.
- Instructions and explanations are clear, and in most lessons, teachers share with children the purpose of their learning and what success should look like. A next step would be to develop further the co-creation of both learning intentions and success criteria, supporting children to develop their knowledge and understanding.
- Children develop confidence and a sense of responsibility through contributing effectively to school life. They participate in local community events and take key roles on various committees. Children feel that their voice is heard and acted upon, they are keen to share this further with their classes. Pupil leadership could now be further developed in class learning experiences. In a few lessons children take responsibility for leading learning. However, many learning activities are teacher led and children, although responsive, are more passive learners. Children would benefit from more independence in their learning where they make decisions, initiate, and organise tasks and demonstrate self-reliance.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. Staff should now continue to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes progressive learning, teaching and assessment. This will support consistently high-quality learning and teaching experiences for all children across the school. Teachers and assistants work hard to provide bright and stimulating learning environments. Classroom spaces and resources are well organised and are conducive to positive learning and teaching. In a few lessons teachers make effective cross curriculum links and challenge children's thinking, knowledge and understanding. There are variable levels of differentiation and challenge in learning and occasions where the pace of learning could be accelerated. Further development of higher order thinking skills and enquiry/curiosity-based learning, matched to children's needs and interests, would support a deepening of learning. In most lessons, teachers make effective use of questioning to encourage children to think. Teachers should continue to develop the use of higher-order questioning more regularly to ensure they challenge all children in their learning. They should provide children with learning experiences and tasks which are open-ended and encourage

critical thinking. Praise is used well throughout the school, resulting in children who are eager to respond and contribute to lessons.

- Learning through play is being developed well in P1. Children are being given the opportunity to explore skills and knowledge through play-based activity which is recorded for monitoring. Staff are keen to develop play pedagogy across the school. They are using national guidance *Realising the Ambition – Being Me (2020)*, to support their understanding. Staff should continue, as planned, to research play pedagogy and embed this into high-quality opportunities and experiences throughout the curriculum.
- All teachers use interactive whiteboards well to present information and deliver lessons. The use of digital technology within learning is being developed to include the wider use of tablets and laptops. At present, almost all children have some access to digital resources for learning across the curriculum. As planned, staff should develop this area further. This should support children to have increased opportunities to develop skills for learning, life, and work, through the use of digital technology. Staff, children, and parents make good use of digital approaches to communicate and to share learning, both in school learning experiences and learning at home. Flipped online home learning should now be explored further, particularly for senior children. This would support to challenge planned learning experiences and develop further independent learning opportunities.
- A variety of formative assessment approaches are being used effectively across the school. The extent to which these approaches are embedded varies across classes. While teachers gather assessment information in literacy and numeracy, there is a need for this to become more integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Staff should be clear how assessment leads to effective interventions. Across the majority of classes, pupils are involved in self and peer assessment, however, this is not yet used consistently. Enhancing this will support up-skilling children in the language of reflecting and evaluating their learning. It will encourage children to take ownership of their learning, therefore knowing more about what they need to do to improve. In most classes, children are provided with a range of oral and written feedback. When children receive high-quality feedback, this helps to identify their successes and their next steps in learning. Staff should continue to extend their skills in providing more evaluative feedback to help pupils understand how they are progressing. As planned, staff should continue to develop a more coherent whole-school approach to assessment.
- Across the school there is a strong ethos of staff collegiality and positive working relationships. Teachers work very well together. Moderation activities have taken place, particularly in writing and numeracy. As planned, staff should continue with further development in moderation of learning across the curriculum, within and beyond the school. This would further support a shared understanding of progression, pace of learning and achievement within and across Curriculum for Excellence levels.
- Planning meetings provide a useful opportunity for teachers and senior leaders to discuss strategies, interventions and next steps for all pupils, particularly those requiring support. Staff are aware of which children face challenges and provide additional support. Assistants are timetabled effectively, providing a balance of highly effective direct support to individual pupils and wider support for learning, including intuitive support. The acting headteacher and senior leaders have developed a helpful tool to track and monitor progress in literacy and numeracy. As a next step, including information about progression within a level would make the tracking and monitoring system more robust. This should support maintaining high standards and raising attainment even further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The acting headteacher and senior leadership team have identified accurately the need for the review of curriculum rationale, to be aligned with updated vision, values and aims.
- Learning pathways utilise the extent of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and design principles. Wellbeing sits at the heart of the curriculum, with a clear plan to extend this to further include a focus on UNCRC and rights-based learning. Planning overviews are in place for progressive learning opportunities in most aspects of the curriculum. The acting headteacher and staff have identified effectively which areas of the curriculum require updated and refreshed. Examples include addressing aspects of writing, to ensure progression. Inter-disciplinary learning opportunities are offered, linking learning across the curriculum. Staff are proactive in responding to changing circumstances through a global context, for example linking learning in response to the situation in Ukraine.
- Children experience learning both indoors and outdoors routinely. Regular access to their local and wider community is enhancing learning experiences. Strong partnership working supports learning pathways very effectively. Whilst there has been an impact of partnership working as a result of the pandemic, senior leaders and staff have utilised creative means to offer opportunities to children. Children benefit from their statutory entitlement of planned, progressive high quality physical education.
- Transitions into and out of school are very well planned and considered. Parents and partners describe the preparation for transition in extremely positive terms. Parents and children feel at ease with their new environments. Teachers welcoming children into P1 at Westerton Primary School have a good understanding of needs, due to effective information sharing and joint planning. Similarly, joint working with the staff at Boclair Academy is contributing to children experiencing a confident start to their new school career.
- In supporting the development of the curriculum, senior leaders and staff should continue to develop appropriate learning pathways for all curricular areas. This will ensure children benefit from learning opportunities which develop progressively their skills and knowledge across all contexts for learning. Extending monitoring and tracking across the curriculum would support planned approaches to predicting expected levels of attainment and teachers' professional judgement.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Overall, parents report that their experiences of engaging with the school are very positive. Parents appreciate the work of senior leaders and have confidence in their vision for the school. Almost all parents agree that the school is led well and that staff treat children fairly and respectfully. Almost all parents feel that the school support children’s emotional wellbeing and are satisfied with the quality of teaching in the school.
- Parents acknowledge that the work of the Parent Council has been less active since the pandemic. The school is working to improve parental engagement and participation in learning. A few parents volunteer in after school clubs. As planned, continuing to promote the work of the Parent Council should increase opportunities for consultation with the parent forum. Parents and staff collaborate well in the PTA, which successfully provides an extended range of experiences for all learners.

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 at Westerton Primary School are warm and welcoming. Senior leaders create a sense of belonging and purpose throughout the school. Across the school, almost all children feel safe and well cared for. Children can identify adults they trust and have the confidence to speak to staff if they feel worried or unsafe. Staff communicate the links between wellbeing and achievement effectively to children. Teachers use regular wellbeing check-ins which are respectful of children's dignity and privacy. Children trust their teachers. They report that they believe they will get help if they need it.
- Staff assess and track children's wellbeing very effectively by conducting regular surveys using the wellbeing indicators. Senior leaders use the information very well to establish how best to support, assist and encourage children when they experience difficulties. Additionally, senior leaders identify common areas where children throughout the school need support. Teachers focus on these identified areas through the health and wellbeing curriculum. For example, if analysis shows that children do not feel respected, teachers plan lessons and assemblies around giving and receiving respect. This responsive and inclusive approach results in children sustaining very positive relationships within the school community. Senior leaders can illustrate how this tracking is leading to improvements in children's mental and physical wellbeing.
- There is a supportive atmosphere within the school and relationships between staff and children are very respectful and productive. Children understand each other's differing needs and show empathy and patience for others where necessary. Almost all young people feel a sense of belonging and are proud of their school. The strong focus on nurture increased after the period of school closures. Staff have focused on both nurture and developing a growth mind-set during professional learning. The majority of children understand the concepts and language used to describe elements of both nurture and growth mind-set. They can describe what they should do if they are confused or find something difficult. Although not fully evident yet, combining nurturing and growth mind-set approaches are improving children's resilience, perseverance and problem-solving skills. Through regular discussion at assembly and in class, almost all children understand the wellbeing indicators and are familiar with the 'wellbeing wheel'.
- An effective and diverse outdoor learning programme is in place. A mixture of classroom activities and outdoor pursuits help children to make connections in their learning. The rich natural environment surrounding the school is used to good effect in exciting and imaginative lessons that children enjoy. Children experience a breadth of well attended after school activities, which staff and a few parents lead. The majority of children participate in these activities and develop important skills in teamwork, sharing, physical health and fair play.
- All children are enthusiastically engaged in promoting the school values of happiness, belief and achievement. Across the school, almost all children have the opportunity to demonstrate

responsibility by taking on roles in classroom or whole school activities. For example, house and vice-captains recently contributed to re-wording the nurture principles and presented at an assembly. This gives children clear ownership of these values and allows for peer to peer discussion about the impact of nurture within the school.

- Nurturing values in the school are evident in all classes. Language used by staff and children is respectful and considerate. The 'blueprint for behaviour' encourages positive relationships, respectful conversations and patience amongst everyone in the school community. Senior leaders should consider reviewing aspects of language in the policy to ensure it reflects their nurturing ethos throughout. This will support the consistent relational approach that the school endorses.
- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of legislative requirements. Staff regularly engage in professional learning which supports their understanding of statutory duties. The local authority wellbeing assessment tool is being used to very good effect by senior leaders. Commendably, analysis from assessment is leading to tangible improvements for a few identified children who have expressed concerns through the surveys. Analysis also influences the curriculum to ensure that the personal and social education is relevant and improves the wellbeing of children.
- The school has an effective tracking and planning system in place for all children with additional support needs. Senior leaders regularly consult with lead professionals and partners to update and amend support plans for all those with identified needs. Staff support children very well to overcome barriers to learning and almost all identified children are progressing and achieving well. Attendance is good and the acting headteacher identifies and responds to any issues at an early stage. Senior leaders work closely with the home-school link worker to monitor the effectiveness of interventions, amending and adapting as necessary.
- There are many opportunities to recognise and value diversity within the school year. Children are encouraged to challenge discrimination and be active against racism, homophobia or any type of bullying. Almost all children report that bullying is not an issue at the school. Almost all children have a clear understanding of how to protect their own and others' rights. Children contribute well to establishing charters which contribute to a respectful learning environment. As planned, staff should now extend children's rights in learning within the context of the UNCRC.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide resources for effective intervention for those in need of additional support. This includes support for targeted individuals or groups of children. A school counsellor provides valuable individualised support during transitions. Almost all children with additional support needs are making good progress in their learning. As planned, the school should continue to use PEF to focus on closing the attainment gap, particularly in numeracy.
- School partners including active schools, outdoor education providers, school counsellors and other education professionals contribute well to positive outcomes for children. Partners feel valued and respected within the school and contribute well to individual support plans where appropriate. Educational psychologists give valuable advice and guidance to senior leaders and help to evaluate the effectiveness of planned interventions.
- 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 school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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 very good. At the early level, almost all children attain expected Curriculum for Excellence levels for all aspects of literacy and numeracy. At first and second level, almost all children attain expected Curriculum for Excellence levels for listening and talking, with most attaining expected Curriculum for Excellence levels for reading, writing and numeracy. A few children are exceeding expected levels. Almost all children who face barriers to learning are making good progress and are attaining well.

Listening and Talking

- Across the school almost all children speak confidently and articulately. At early level, children are beginning to learn to listen and take turns. The majority of children at first level are able to listen to oral information and use this to make notes. Older children can select and listen to spoken texts to find information for a specific purpose. They can make oral presentations showing awareness of different communication techniques including eye contact, and pace.

Reading

- Children's attainment in reading is good, with particular strengths in attainment in reading at the early level. In Primary 1, almost all children are developing their strategies for reading effectively, building knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns. They are building up their sight vocabulary well through class activities. At first level, children read confidently and are aware of fluency and expression when reading aloud. Children have a good awareness of genre and discuss different kinds of books and identify the features of non-fiction texts. At second level, almost all children read well with fluency and expression. They comment knowledgeably on the books they are reading and identify their main features. As part of improvement priorities, staff are developing further enjoyment of reading by redesigning the school library. Commendably, reading champions have been appointed in each class who will take on a key role in this development. Across the school, this should support children to develop their skills further by reading a wider variety of material for enjoyment.

Writing

- Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in writing. Senior leaders and staff are addressing aspects of progress in writing which were impacted by COVID-19. In Primary 1, most children are beginning to write letters independently. They are able to write their name and recognise their name in print. At first level, almost all children write very well for a range of purposes such as experiments and reports. They are exploring different kinds of writing and are learning a range of literary devices such as alliterations and similes. At second level, most children write appropriately in a number of different genres and write a range of extended pieces of writing. Presentation of children's work is good in most classes across the school. A few children need to be encouraged to use punctuation well to develop their writing skills further.

Number, money and measure

- Children in P1 can order and count forwards and backwards up to 20 and identify a number on dice without having to count. At first level children can confidently identify the value of each digit with three-digit numbers. Children are also able to use pictorial representations to demonstrate their understanding of simple equivalent fractions. At first level almost all children use a range of strategies to solve addition, subtraction and multiplication problems. A few children need support when estimating and calculating area. At second level almost all children are secure in rounding and using decimal fractions to two decimal places. They can apply this skill to solve money and measurement problems with confidence. Overall, to develop their skills further, children now need to continue to extend their skills in mental agility in calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- In P1 children are able to use position terms in front of, behind and under with confidence. They can refer to these in play and across learning. At first level children can identify right angles within a shape. They can recognise symmetry in two-dimensional shapes, pictures and designs. At second level children are able to identify acute, obtuse and straight angles and can apply this knowledge to calculate missing angles.

Information Handling

- At early level, children create block graphs and sort items into identified categories. For example, sorting bugs into categories through small world play. Children at first and second level are able to gather, collate and interpret information using bar and line graphs, tally marks and Venn diagrams. Children should continue to develop their skills in using a range of ways to collect and present information, including through further use of digital technology. At second level, children have developed an understanding of the ideas of uncertainty and chance and can use this to make reasoned predictions.

Attainment over time

- The school's data demonstrates sustained high levels of attainment in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy over time. Over the past three years, most or almost all children attained expected levels in literacy and numeracy across the school. This consistent trend is a strong feature of the school. Monitoring and tracking of attainment is particularly robust at a strategic level. This includes trends studied effectively by senior leaders. Staff are increasing in confidence when making professional judgements using a wide variety of data, to ensure very good progress for learners. Senior leaders are reviewing and extending planning and tracking processes, to ensure continued rigour and pace of learning, including across broader curricular areas. This should support continued high levels of attainment across the curriculum and the best possible outcomes for learners.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Almost all children are successful, confident and contribute to the life of the school. Children contribute actively to the wider life of the school through their participation in a wealth of committees and clubs. Children achieve many successes through a wide range of opportunities within and outwith school, including residential stays. Children are proud of their many successes. Successes both from within and outwith school are celebrated through a variety of means. This includes newsletters, at whole school assemblies, house points and 'Tea with Miss T'. There is a strong commitment and enthusiasm for participation in the Junior Duke Award Scheme, in which many children achieve success.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have effective systems in place to track different identified groups of children. This includes those who require additional support, are care experienced, have English as an additional language or face poverty-related barriers to their learning. As a result, staff are able

to identify children who are not making suitable progress and put appropriate interventions in place. Senior leaders utilise additional funding from the Scottish Attainment Challenge and PEF effectively, for example, in providing additional staffing. The school addresses the poverty related attainment gap by providing dedicated teaching to support individuals, groups of children and families. Senior leaders monitor interventions and review as appropriate, resulting in successful progress towards closing their identified gaps. Senior leaders and staff are very aware of the cost of the school day and are sensitive to the increasing financial pressure on their children and families. They are actively engaging the Parent Council and pupil leadership groups to work together to find solutions to ensure equity of experience for all.

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.