

Summarised inspection findings

Muirhead Primary School

South Ayrshire Council

23 January 2024

Key contextual information

Muirhead Primary School is a non-denominational primary school which serves the Muirhead area of Troon, in South Ayrshire. At the time of inspection there were 128 children on the school roll, working across seven classes. Thirty-three percent of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 1 and 2. Over the last year, there have been a number of changes in the senior leadership team. The headteacher has been in post since August 2023 and is supported by an acting depute headteacher and an acting principal teacher.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Senior leaders and staff have created a welcoming and nurturing ethos across the school. All staff know children well and have positive, respectful relationships with children. All staff use praise well to encourage and support children with their learning.
- Across the school, children are friendly and interact respectfully with staff and visitors. Almost all children work and play well with each other and engage very well with learning. Children demonstrate the school values well in their interactions with each other. Children from all stages are represented in the pupil council. The pupil council contributes successfully to school events such as charity fundraisers. They are involved in decisions about the life and work of the school. For example, the pupil council recently surveyed children's views regarding the house point system. This led to amendments to the arrangements for end of term rewards.
- All teachers have developed attractive learning environments which are well organised and calm. In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions. They display the purpose and outcomes of lessons clearly and refer to them throughout lessons. Teachers use plenary sessions well to reinforce key learning points for children and set the learning focus for the next lesson. Teachers should involve children in creating outcomes in their own words more regularly, so they understand fully what success looks like. Most children enjoy learning at an appropriate pace, although a few children would benefit from more demanding work. Teachers should ensure all learning activities provide appropriate levels of challenge. This will help children make the best possible progress.
- Across the school, teachers use a range of questioning well to extend children's thinking and check their understanding. In a few lessons, questioning is used very effectively to promote deeper learning. In most lessons, children explain confidently the learning strategies they use. In the majority of lessons, teachers use oral and written feedback effectively to support children in their learning. Children set personal termly targets in literacy and numeracy and have opportunities to self- and peer-assess, most notably in relation to writing. Children would benefit from more regular opportunities to reflect on progress towards meeting their termly targets.

- Teachers plan a range of interesting learning experiences which motivate most children well. Across the school, children benefit from worthwhile opportunities to engage in outdoor learning, making good use of local areas. Visitors to the school and trips enhance children's learning experiences. For example, children recently visited a local history museum to explore learning linked to a topic on Vikings. Staff from the local football club are supporting the development of a culture of reading for pleasure, through visits to the school. As a result of these experiences, children are developing a wide range of knowledge and skills. As planned, teachers should now support children to profile the skills for learning, life and work they are developing through their learning experiences.
- Staff use digital technologies well, such as interactive whiteboards, to enhance children's learning. Children are developing independent learning skills well using digital technology. For example, P1 children recently used matrix barcodes to watch a video linked to construction.
- Staff are developing play-based learning at the early level. Staff should continue to engage with national guidance to ensure the quality of spaces, experiences and interactions promote effective play pedagogy. This will help to ensure that all opportunities for child-led play are developmentally appropriate.
- Across the school, staff demonstrate a strong ethos of collegiality and teamwork. Staff share ideas and good practice regularly with each other. This is leading to improved planning of learning and teaching. Teachers make good use of local authority and school progression pathways to plan children's learning over a range of timescales. Teachers use the local authority outdoor learning pathway to ensure children enjoy progressive outdoor learning experiences. Children have a voice in planning their learning linked to topics, which increases their motivation to learn. They share with teachers what they already know and what they want to know more about at the start of each topic. As planned, teachers should continue to involve children in decisions about what and how they learn across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan learning effectively for children requiring additional support. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to ensure that targets are specific and measurable. This will help them to clearly identify the progress children are making.
- The headteacher leads termly meetings with teachers to discuss children's progress and attainment. Together they identify children who are not making expected progress and agree approaches to support children's learning. Senior leaders should continue to monitor how well teaching and learning approaches are raising attainment and accelerating children's progress.
- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches effectively to evaluate children's learning in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use evidence from standardised assessments, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments, to support their judgements on children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. As planned, staff should continue to develop moderation of learning across the curriculum, within and beyond the school. This will continue to support their shared understanding of national standards.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school is good. In June 2023, the majority of children at P1 and P4 and most children at P7 achieved appropriate CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children make good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy. A few children are capable of making better progress.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children follow instructions and listen well to staff. At first level, most children ask and respond well to a range of questions. At second level, most children express their opinions on a range of topics and listen respectfully to the opinions of others. They enjoy participating in debates. Across all levels, children would benefit from more planned opportunities to develop their talking skills in a wider range of contexts.

Reading

- Children who have achieved early level, use strategies well to help sound out new words. They hear and say patterns and rhyme. They are less confident discussing their favourite stories. Children who are on track to achieve first level, read fluently and with expression. At second level, children find and select information from a range of sources. They require further practice responding to inferential and evaluative questions. Across the school, children have access to books from class and school libraries.

Writing

- Most children who have achieved early level, write simple sentences using capital letters and full stops. They now need more practise developing pencil control through planned writing opportunities. At first level, the majority of children identify and use verbs, nouns and connectives accurately in their writing. They explain the features of information reports and letters. They are less confident in using descriptive language to engage their reader. At second level, most children write discursive essays and narrative texts. Across the school, children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write across the week. This would help them to consolidate their writing skills and techniques. Teachers should support children to improve handwriting and presentation of their work.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy. A few children are capable of making better progress.

Number, money and measure

- Children who have achieved early level, add and subtract confidently within 10. They count accurately forwards and backwards in sequence to 20 and beyond. At first and second level, most children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their stage. At first level, most children confidently round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They convert between pounds and pence and are confident with units of measure. In all classes, children use a variety of concrete materials to support their calculations. At second level, children write numbers accurately up to one million and use partitioning to show the value of digits within number. They accurately convert between decimals, fractions and percentages. Children at second level should now extend rounding to decimal places.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children name almost all two-dimensional shapes. At first level, most children give examples of right-angles in real-life contexts. They would benefit from revision on the properties of three-dimensional objects. At second level, most children confidently describe a range of angles including obtuse and reflex angles.

Information handling

- At early level, most children match and sort familiar and unfamiliar objects. Children who have achieved first level, interpret bar graphs and explain the labelling of the axis. At second level, most children confidently analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a range of line and bar graphs.

Attainment over time

- Since her appointment the headteacher has worked with staff to improve the quality of assessment information. She now has accurate data for individuals and groups of children, for example those who face barriers to their learning. This data shows most children are making improved progress in literacy and numeracy. Inspection activity confirms that overall, most children are on track to achieve national levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders should now develop further tracking systems to demonstrate children's progress across other areas of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders monitor children's attendance on a monthly basis, ensuring appropriate action is taken when attendance levels decrease. As a result, attendance levels across the school have increased in recent years and are now above local authority averages.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated in a range of ways, including at school assemblies and on wall displays. Children have opportunities to develop skills and attributes through lunchtime and after school clubs. For example, children enjoy access to a wide range of sporting and other activities which help them to develop skills such as teamwork. Staff track participation to identify gaps in children's opportunities for achievement. This is helping staff to plan and lead clubs to ensure children do not miss out on opportunities to develop skills in a range of contexts. Staff should now also track progression of skills being developed through children's leadership roles and opportunities for achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff know children and their families well. They have a strong awareness of the socio-economic background of children and their families. As a result, children and families benefit from a range of practical support, for example access to pre-loved school uniform.

- The headteacher has made effective use of a range of data to identify poverty-related attainment and other gaps. The headteacher uses this information effectively to determine the rationale for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) spending. PEF is focused on targeted support for literacy and wellbeing. The Parent Council are consulted in relation to PEF spend. Senior leaders should continue to track the impact of funded interventions to ensure accelerated progress in closing poverty-related attainment gaps.

Other relevant evidence

- Muirhead Primary School achieved a 3rd Rights Respecting School Gold Award in June 2023.
- Children benefit from two hours of high-quality physical education per week, in line with national guidance.

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.