

Summarised inspection findings

Kirkhill Primary School

East Renfrewshire Council

12 March 2024

Key contextual information

Kirkhill Primary School is situated in the suburb of Newton Mearns in East Renfrewshire. At the time of the inspection there were 617 children on the school roll, across 21 classes. The headteacher's leadership team includes two deputy headteachers and a principal teacher. Approximately, 11% of children have English as an additional language. The school currently receives Pupil Equity Funding. This session, there have been a number of staffing changes due to absence.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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

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

- Relationships between children and staff are highly positive. Across the school community, these trusting and respectful relationships are demonstrated clearly as children work and play together. Children's learning is underpinned by the school values of perseverance, resilience, respect, optimism, unity and diversity (PROUD). These values are used well by staff to encourage children to succeed and as a result, children's behaviour is of a very high standard. Almost all children are eager participants in their learning. They are highly motivated and ambitious to succeed. Children are confident and articulate, and speak positively about their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff work well together to develop a highly inclusive ethos. Children learn extensively about the importance of diversity and valuing others. Children who require additional support with their wellbeing are supported effectively to sustain attendance in class through nurturing approaches or targeted interventions. This is increasing children's engagement as they are supported effectively to be ready to learn.
- Staff continue to embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Teachers and children work well together to develop and use helpful class charters. These are deepening children's understanding of their rights as learners. Staff consider and act on children's views to improve learning and teaching. For example, children in the 'Young Leaders of Learning' group make effective use of How Good is OUR School? to evaluate school experiences. Their suggestions lead to positive changes, such as increased time learning outdoors.
- In almost all classes, children personalise and make choices about aspects of their learning. Most teachers offer opportunities to extend learning by providing tasks with increasing levels of difficulty for children to choose. Almost all children demonstrate a high level of resilience when selecting and completing individual tasks and activities. Teachers should increase opportunities within lessons for children to lead and take ownership of their own learning. A few children find aspects of self-directed learning challenging and will benefit from further support to build their skills.

- Senior leaders and teachers identify and agree core features of high-quality learning and teaching for Kirkhill Primary, through the school's 'Gold Standard'. This clarifies expectations of standards required and leads to consistent high-quality experiences for children across the school. Teachers have a strong focus on professional values and career-long professional growth. They consider how their teaching impacts on children's experiences. They lead and share their professional learning, including research-based enquiry. This is positively impacting on the quality of teaching, and on children's progress in literacy and numeracy, and their self-esteem.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and share the purpose of learning effectively. This includes supporting children to make links with and build on prior learning. Teachers identify and share with children how to be successful in tasks and activities clearly. Staff and children review and reflect on learning well in most lessons. Teachers should build on this effective practice and involve children more consistently in co-creating measures of how to be successful in learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding and promote curiosity. A few teachers are particularly skilful in using questioning to extend children's critical thinking. Teachers should continue to enhance their use of questioning to support children's higher-order thinking skills.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide high-quality activities that are well-matched to children's levels of ability. They provide targeted teaching for groups of children and individuals. Teachers use comprehensive information about children's strengths and additional support needs to provide effective learning experiences. Support staff assist children skilfully which is helping children's progress in learning and wellbeing.
- Children learn well in an encouraging and motivating learning environment. This includes, for example, staff maintaining creative wall displays of children's progress in learning. These help learners to make connections across different contexts of learning. Engaging library areas and quiet spaces encourage children to spend time enjoying reading. Teachers also plan and provide regular, enjoyable outdoor learning experiences for children across a range of curricular areas.
- Teachers use digital technologies successfully as a tool to support teaching and to enhance learning experiences. Younger children scan matrix barcodes independently using a tablet to access games and texts. They demonstrate their mathematical knowledge by directing programmable floor robots and extend their literacy skills using writing tablets. In a few classes, children working at Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) second level, are using an online platform well to extend and share their learning experiences.
- Children across the early stages learn well through play experiences. Teachers have a sound understanding of national practice guidance and are developing well-considered approaches. They create purposeful learning environments that support children well to be curious and make personal choices. Children reinforce and consolidate their learning in literacy and numeracy through quality interactions with adults and use of open-ended materials.
- Senior leaders maintain a strong overview of planned assessments across the school. Teachers use a range of formative, summative and standardised assessments rigorously to measure children's progress in all curricular areas. They also use assessment information systematically to inform the planning of learning. Teachers should further support children to identify clearly their strengths and next steps in learning as part of regular target setting and self-assessment. This should help children to take further ownership of their learning.

- Teachers have a well-developed understanding of the importance of moderation as a result of working regularly with stage partners in school and with colleagues in other local schools. They have a strong, shared understanding of expected standards of planning and assessing learning across curricular areas. Moderation approaches confirm teachers' accurate professional judgements about children's progress and achievement of CfE levels.
- Senior leaders use a well-balanced quality assurance calendar which helps to promote consistency of planning and assessment. All teachers create comprehensive annual and termly overviews and plan learning well across all curricular areas. They make effective use of CfE experiences and outcomes, local authority progression frameworks, national Benchmarks and children's assessment information. They build on children's prior learning appropriately and plan greater levels of challenge for children who are exceeding nationally expected levels. Teachers plan responsively to children's emerging needs as well as learners' feedback on learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers use a well-established local authority system to monitor rigorously children's progress in learning. This includes reviewing the progress of groups, such as those receiving free meal entitlement or who have additional support needs. Senior leaders review tracking data termly with class teachers. Together, they use this information carefully to identify individual children who are not progressing as expected. Identified children are supported successfully through a range of appropriate interventions. Senior leaders and staff evaluate the impact of interventions regularly to ensure that these lead to children making improved progress. Teachers use data very well to ensure children experience continuity in their learning as they move through the school. Teachers work closely with secondary colleagues to review children's attainment from primary and into secondary education. This helps staff to check the reliability and validity of data used to measure progress in learning.

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

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

- Almost all children attained nationally expected CfE levels for reading and talking and listening in 2022-23. Most children at P1 and almost all children at P4 and P7 attained expected CfE levels in writing. Almost all children in P1 and P4 and most at P7 attained expected CfE levels in numeracy. By the end of key milestone stages, the majority of children exceed national expectations. Overall, children's attainment outcomes for literacy and numeracy are above national and local authority averages.
- Almost all children who receive additional support for their learning make very good progress against their individual targets for learning. Most are achieving nationally expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Most children with English as an additional language make very good progress in their learning in literacy and almost all in numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in literacy and English is very good.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children are highly articulate and confident. Almost all children are attentive and listen carefully to instructions in groups and whole class settings. Almost all children working towards early level demonstrate growing listening and talking skills. They are curious and ask questions to find out more. Almost all children working towards first and second level use sophisticated vocabulary accurately in context. Almost all children express their ideas and opinions confidently. Almost all children working towards second level build respectfully on the ideas of others during discussions.

Reading

- Children demonstrate a love of reading and select texts across a variety of genre regularly. Most children working towards early level use letter knowledge confidently to sound out simple words. Almost all children working towards first level identify features of fiction and non-fiction texts. They read well with growing fluency and expression. Across second level, almost all children explain preferences for authors and genres. They justify selections with thoughtful reasons. Across second level, almost all children use knowledge of context clues, punctuation and grammar to read increasingly complex and unseen texts with fluency and understanding.

Writing

- Most children working towards early level are developing legible letter formation. Most are beginning to use capital letters and full stops appropriately in sentences. Almost all children working towards first level spell most commonly used words correctly. They write

successfully for a variety of purposes and understand well the features of different genre. Almost all children working towards second level use figurative language tools effectively to engage their reader. They use interesting words and phrases from texts they have read to enhance their writing. Most children use varied sentence structures and include increasingly complex vocabulary. At early level, children will benefit from practising writing independently for a range of purposes. Across first and second levels, children will further benefit from writing more regularly and at length.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all children working towards early level add and subtract numbers within 10 using concrete materials. They are building their mental agility and knowledge of number facts. Almost all children working towards first level calculate fractions of whole numbers. They use the equal sign as a balance to solve simple algebraic problems accurately. They are developing their understanding of equivalent fractions. Almost all children working towards second level confidently use knowledge of the relationship between common fractions, decimal fractions, and percentages to solve problems. They read and record time in both 12-hour and 24-hour notation and can convert these. They will benefit from continuing to apply their skills within increasingly challenging contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children working towards early level use language of direction and position accurately. They are exploring left and right turns. Almost all children working towards first level describe properties of two-dimensional shapes. They are increasing their understanding of features of three-dimensional objects. Almost all children at second level confidently use their knowledge of the link between the eight compass points and angles to describe, follow and record directions. They use mathematical language accurately to describe and classify angles.

Information handling

- Almost all children working towards early level sort information into simple pictograms. They are developing skills in interpreting data. At first level, almost all children understand and extract key information from charts and tables. At second level, almost all children analyse and draw conclusions from a variety of sources, including pie charts. Older children will benefit from using digital software to support their learning and practise their skills.

Attainment over time

- Staff use local authority systems effectively to check and monitor the progress and attainment of children. This process supports teachers well to identify gaps in learning, direct resources, and plan responsive interventions where required. Senior leaders and teachers discuss and set ambitious attainment targets for individuals, groups and cohorts. They review and discuss these termly. Senior leaders have robust evidence that demonstrates almost all children maintain consistently high standards of attainment as they move through the school.
- Children make strong progress in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) over time. School staff build children's knowledge and skills effectively. Children develop a sound understanding of design principles and build on their inquiry and investigative skills as they move through the school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements within and outwith school are valued and celebrated in a wide range of ways. Senior leaders share slide shows at weekly assemblies that include children's achievements which parents have shared. Staff track children's achievements. They use this information well to identify children at risk of missing out and take appropriate action. Most children attend clubs organised by staff and partners. Across the school, children compete successfully at a range of events. This develops their teamwork and communication. Staff and children worked together successfully to gain national accreditation for rights-based learning. Children understand the contribution they make to their school community as responsible citizens.
- At first and second level, children discuss their leadership roles across a range of contexts. For example, older children speak enthusiastically about supporting younger children with numeracy and reading. Children are beginning to make links across leadership experiences and their achievements. With support, they recognise the skills that they are developing. As planned, staff should help children to identify, discuss and reflect on their skills. This should develop a greater understanding of skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff carefully consider the school's equity and equalities strategy and meaningful 'cost of the school day' approaches. Senior leaders create and discuss demographic and equity overviews for each class. As a result, all staff have a sound understanding of challenges affecting the school community. They ensure financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for learning and achievement. Staff provide free clubs, clothing, and equipment, and ensure all children have access to digital technologies to support their learning.
- The school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation is used effectively to support the raising attainment strategy for literacy and numeracy and to support wellbeing for targeted groups of children. Currently, funding is used for staffing and to purchase resources to support children with their learning and wellbeing. Senior leaders identify gaps in attainment using a comprehensive range of information. Working with staff, they plan and provide appropriate interventions to support children facing barriers to their learning. Staff use a range of tools and evaluations well to measure the positive impact of this work. The headteacher can demonstrate how school staff are successfully narrowing gaps in literacy learning for children with English as an additional language. Evidence also shows children who receive wellbeing and nurture support make good progress in aspects such as school attendance and readiness to learn. Interventions show positive impact and are accelerating progress and improving outcomes for children.

Other relevant evidence

- The school's attendance figures are above the national average. The headteacher monitors regularly children's attendance. Working closely with a range of partners, senior leaders and staff provide support for families facing challenges. For example, for a few children nurture group support has helped to increase time in school. As planned, senior leaders should continue their work to reduce late coming and absence.
- The headteacher consults with staff, the Parent Council and focus groups of children when determining the focus of the school's PEF spend. She shares in detail the progress the school makes to narrow gaps in learning annually with all parents.
- Children experience their entitlement to two hours of quality physical education each week. Indoor spaces for sports are limited at times. Staff make effective use of the areas and equipment available, both indoors and outside, to maximise learning opportunities and support children's skills development.

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.