

Summarised inspection findings

St Aloysius Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

1 April 2025

Key contextual information

St Aloysius Primary School is a denominational school situated towards the southern side of Airdrie and serves the communities of Chapelhall and Salsburgh, Shotts. The Honeywell Nursery Class is an integral part of the school. It is part of the St Margaret's Academy cluster of schools. St Aloysius Primary and Honeywell Nursery Class share the purpose-built campus building with a non-denominational school.

The acting headteacher has been in post for five months. She is supported by a depute headteacher and a principal teacher.

Children move to St Aloysius Primary School from a variety of pre-primary experiences. Approximately 250 children currently attend the school across 10 classes.

Attendance is in line with the national average. Exclusions are above the national average. In September 2023, 21.9% of children lived in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland and 4.4% of children had additional support needs (ASN). In February 2024, 10% of children at P6 and P7 were registered for free school meals. Senior leaders state that after a review or recording processes within the school there are, in January 2025, 40.5% of children who require additional support and 16% are registered for free school meals.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ learning and engagement■ quality of teaching■ effective use of assessment■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

- Children are proud members of the community and of the staff who support them. Senior leaders, together with stakeholders, aim for members of the community to be healthy, educated, aspirational, responsible and tolerant (HEART), by experiencing peace, understanding, love, success and enthusiasm (PULSE). All children demonstrate the values across all areas of the school. Staff are beginning to reference HEART and PULSE in classes.
- Staff and children are respectful towards each other. Children benefit from strong, nurturing relationships with staff. The behaviour of all children across the school is very positive and sets the tone for learning and engagement. This exemplifies the high expectations of behaviour and attitudes set by the school community and reflects the PULSE.
- Children's independent learning is supported in most classes by helpful displays and useful information on classroom walls. Most children are motivated to learn and are engaged in most lessons. They show positive attitudes to learning in most classes. Children work well individually, in pairs and groups. Most children interact confidently with their peers and with adults, including teachers, support staff and visitors.
- Senior leaders recently introduced a "good lesson" structure to support teachers to deliver learning which is well-planned and organised. Most teachers use this well to support learning

experiences. However, most lessons are overly teacher-led. A minority of children become disengaged when listening as a whole class. The majority of teachers need to practise a wider range of teaching approaches and provide most children with a range of opportunities to lead their learning. Staff should continue to work collectively to develop high-quality learning experiences consistently across the school.

- In the majority of classes, the pace of learning needs to be brisker to engage all children fully with their learning. Children's positive attitude to learning is more evident when tasks and activities are stimulating and well matched to their individual needs and interests. A majority of children would benefit from greater challenge in their learning, in order to improve their attainment and be more independent in their learning. Teachers should provide more opportunities for children to apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts to help children deepen their understanding of key concepts and ideas.
- In most classes, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. This enables children to understand what they are learning. In all classes, teachers share the purpose of learning and what success looks like with children. In a few classes, children are involved in identifying how they will be successful in their learning. Senior leaders and staff should work together to further explore ways in which high-quality success criteria can support children to lead their own learning and understand themselves better as learners.
- A minority of teachers use questioning techniques effectively to challenge children's thinking and promote curiosity. In most classes, questioning is used mainly to check for understanding. Staff need to develop further their questioning techniques as a natural part of teaching and learning, to extend children's thinking and deepen their understanding.
- Most children from P1 to P7 articulate and identify well the skills they are developing and using in class. This is because of the recent, whole school focus on learning about skills. Staff should continue to develop this important work, for example, by using a progression framework developed by Skills Development Scotland.
- All teachers are aware of children in their classes who require additional support. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to use assessment information and observations of children to plan timely and appropriate interventions to support their learning.
- Senior leaders recently invested in additional digital devices to support and enhance learning. All teachers use digital boards to deliver learning and are engaging with professional learning to upskill them to deliver learning more effectively using digital technology. All classes are timetabled weekly to attend the recently developed 'digi-den' where they receive specialist teaching. This helps children to develop important digital techniques and to explore a range of appropriate applications and websites. As planned, teachers should build on this, by embedding digital technology more regularly in class lessons across the curriculum.
- Most teachers provide feedback to children orally and in written form within their jotters. This feedback is mainly praise based. It does not provide sufficient detail to enable children to understand their next steps in learning. Teachers need to improve the quality of their feedback to support children to understand what they need to do to improve. Where children have made errors in their work, there is little evidence of them revisiting their learning to improve their performance or demonstrate their understanding.
- Senior leaders and teachers have engaged positively in professional learning around key concepts of learning, teaching and assessment. This is beginning to impact positively on children's learning. With support from staff in the local authority, and through increasing moderation activities, teachers are developing their understanding of nationally expected

standards for assessment. Teachers use national Benchmarks in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This helps them in their overall professional judgement of when children achieve a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. Senior leaders and staff should continue to work together to ensure they make more robust and reliable judgements about children's attainment.

- A few staff use national practice guidance relating to play pedagogy well. At early level, staff integrate play experiences with learning across the curriculum well. Staff are keen to develop learning through play throughout the school. Teachers are beginning to develop classroom environments to stimulate children to be curious and creative through investigation and enquiry. Staff should provide further opportunities for children to develop these skills, including through play. Teachers should continue to monitor the impact of these approaches on improving outcomes for children.
- All teachers plan learning for their classes using CfE experiences and outcomes. They plan blocks of learning with stage partners and other colleagues. All teachers plan learning using local authority frameworks in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These frameworks should be used more flexibly and responsively in order to better meet the needs of all children. Teachers approaches to planning should be developed further to include more relevant experiences, and a more appropriate pace of learning for all children.
- The majority of teachers use formative assessment techniques regularly as part of their daily learning and teaching activities. This is inconsistent across the school. In a few lessons, teachers use assessment activities, such as exit passes, to check for children's understanding. All teachers should develop further their approaches to ongoing assessment and use this information to ensure they provide tasks and activities set at the right level for all children.
- All teachers use class trackers to monitor the progress of children. This information, once transferred to a recently established whole school tracker, enables senior leaders to maintain a clear overview of all children's progress. Senior leaders support teachers to analyse this data at termly reviews. These reviews include discussions about children's attainment, barriers to learning and any specific issues relating to children's wellbeing and development. These reviews help teachers plan learning and identify any supports or interventions that may be required for specific children.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- The overall quality of attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. A minority of children across the school could achieve more. Most children who require additional support with their learning make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. Senior leaders need to continue to support teachers to make more reliable and robust professional judgements of achievement of a CfE level. The school is unable to demonstrate reliable attainment over time prior to 2023/24.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory. Most children make satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Senior leaders should support teachers to strengthen their understanding of assessing children's listening and talking skills. This should increase the reliability of teachers' professional judgements in relation to children's progress and levels of attainment. At early level, most children listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. At first level, most children confidently engage in discussions with their peers and adults. They enjoy talking about their everyday life events. A minority of children at early and first levels find it difficult to take turns. At second level, the majority of children are eager to talk about their tasks using appropriate vocabulary. They talk clearly, audibly and with expression. Across second level, children require further support to ensure they participate effectively in group and class discussions. This will allow them to develop their skills in listening and responding appropriately to their peers.

Reading

- Across the school, children should be given more opportunities to read a range of texts including non-fiction. Most children at early level recognise initial sounds and some simple blends. They are building confidence in reading common words. The majority of children at early level enjoy listening to and retelling stories. At first level, the majority of children talk confidently about the books they are reading and read with increasing fluency. A few children use expression well. Children at first level are not yet confident in answering inferential and evaluative questions about familiar texts. At second level, the majority of children talk confidently about their favourite authors and give explanations about the types of books they enjoy. They are at the early stages of identifying techniques authors use to engage readers, for example, word choice and emotive language.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children insert common words appropriately when given a prompt for their place in a sentence. A few children attempt to use knowledge of sounds to spell

familiar words correctly. Staff should provide more opportunities for children to develop further their use of known sounds to spell familiar words correctly. At first level, the majority of children write well across a range of genres. Most children punctuate their sentences accurately and use common conjunctions. A minority of children need additional support from staff in order for them to write with increasing independence. Children need to be helped further to check their writing to ensure it makes sense. At second level, all children write for different purposes and most children identify confidently features of different genres, such as imaginative and persuasive writing. Children would benefit from further opportunities to create extended pieces of writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.
- Teachers follow the local authority progression pathway for numeracy and maths. This gives a suggested order for teaching topics throughout the year. Senior leaders should now review the numeracy and mathematics curriculum, to ensure that children have more opportunities to revisit and apply their numerical skills in different contexts, including in new and unfamiliar situations.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children correctly identify the number before, the number after and missing numbers in a sequence within five. They recognise, write and order numbers up to 10. They are becoming more confident in recognising odd and even numbers and developing an understanding of measure through practical activities. At first level, the majority of children count in multiples of two, five and 10 competently, and enjoy adding three-digit whole numbers. They are not confident when working with a missing number in a calculation or fractions. At second level, the majority of children understand place value and multiply whole numbers by two-digit numbers. Children are unsure how to solve simple algebraic equations and how to calculate the volume of cubes.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children understand simple positional language such as in front, behind, above and below. They are not aware of the difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. At first level, children enthusiastically describe the points of a compass, but most children need more experience in working with two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At second level, most children need to develop a deeper understanding of shape, position and movement.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children apply their counting skills to ask and answer questions. At first level, a minority of children understand how to use bar charts to collate simple information. At second level, the majority of children discuss the different methods for displaying data, for example, block graphs and Venn diagrams. At all levels, children need to develop further their understanding and use of handling information in relevant ways.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have very recently developed and implemented tracking and monitoring systems to record children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff are at the early stages of tracking progress across a few other curriculum areas. This tracking and monitoring system enables teachers to record, monitor and review children's progress across the year. Staff welcome the increasing use of data which helps inform any supports or interventions, including additional challenge, which may be required for individuals and groups

of children. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop these systems and processes across all stages and curriculum areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated by staff and their peers through school displays, assemblies and in classes. Children and staff benefit from the strong partnership working with the local parish, community groups and other partners. These partnerships provide valuable support to the school community. As a result, children's experiences and understanding about the world of work are enhanced across the curriculum.
- A minority of children develop their skills for learning, life and work through classroom and other school activities, for example as reading leaders, sports ambassadors and being members of committees and councils. Within these groups, most children feel their opinions are valued. Senior leaders should now focus on the impact which pupil leadership groups are having on outcomes for all children.
- All children develop their skills effectively through participating in a wide variety of out-of-school hours learning activities. Most children in P4 to P7 are involved in sports clubs organised by school and 'Active Schools' staff. This helps children to improve their fitness levels, teamwork and leadership skills.
- Senior leaders track participation in achievements for all children, both in and out-of-school. Senior leaders should now develop a skills progression framework to support better children's awareness of their developing skills. This should help children identify which particular skills they should focus on for improvement.
- Children speak enthusiastically about working within the local community. The 'Digi leaders' planned an intergenerational event within the community which helped forge strong links with older people. A local charity highlighted the plight of local refugees. Children are now planning to fundraise to support this part of their local community. The majority of children are beginning to understand how these experiences help develop their self-confidence, citizenship and leadership skills as they support their community.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff are strongly committed to improving the life chances of all children. They know children and their families very well. All staff are becoming more aware of the implications of school activities that incur additional costs for families. Currently, all children can access free fruit, snacks, outdoor clothing and school uniform. Staff should continue with their plans to review the 'cost of the school day' policy.
- Senior leaders and staff have a strong focus on ensuring that every child attends school regularly. A welcoming breakfast club helps a few children attend school on time and be ready for learning. Staff carefully track and monitor attendance for all children and make regular contact with families as required. This helps staff understand better any barriers that may impact on a few children's ability to regularly attend school, and to support them effectively to do so.
- Senior leaders are at the early stages of measuring attainment gaps between groups of children. These include between children who reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles one and two and other deciles. Senior leaders also measure attainment differences between genders and monitor the progress of children affected by poverty. Teachers have implemented specific interventions for targeted children relating to improving attainment literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Recent tracking information indicates that these are beginning to improve outcomes for a few children, however senior leaders recognise the

need to track more rigorously the impact of the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) on closing the poverty-related attainment gap.

Other relevant evidence

- All children participate in religious education and have daily opportunities to engage in religious observance. Weekly assemblies celebrate the Catholic faith and link to the vision and values. Staff work in partnership with the local parish to teach children about the Catholic faith and sacramental preparation. As a result, children are supported effectively to develop their own beliefs and respect the beliefs of others.
- All children regularly visit the local library which is in close proximity to the school. It provides a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, digital resources and a community space. Staff encourage children to borrow texts to support learning in school and reading for pleasure. Staff are at the early stages of developing library areas within the school. Senior leaders should work with staff to develop attractive, welcoming reading areas that motivate and encourage children to select and read a range of texts.
- Children receive a minimum of two hours of high-quality learning experiences in physical education each week.
- Children experience one period per week of taught Spanish from P1 to P7 as part of the school's approach to meeting the Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy. Occasionally this is supplemented with the teacher talking in Spanish during daily activities. Children at the upper stages do not yet experience a third language.
- Senior leaders recognise the need for, and are at the early stages of, involving parents more in decisions relating to the allocation of PEF. Children are not yet consulted on this.

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.