

Summarised inspection findings

Beith Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

28 March 2023

Key contextual information

Beith Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the rural town of Beith, in North Ayrshire. The school serves the catchment of Beith and Barrmill. The headteacher has been in post for 12 years. She was seconded within the local authority for two of these years. She has a shared headship with another primary school. At the time of inspection, the headteacher was supported very well by one depute headteacher and one principal teacher. Currently the school roll is 324 children, organised into 14 classes. Seventy children attend the nursery. All children who attend the nursery class can access 1140 hours through a wide range of attendance patterns. A third of the school roll live in deciles 1-2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) with the remainder living in deciles 3-10. The school received £75,950 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) this session.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 children, staff and families value each other and have developed a strong sense of community across the school. Senior leaders put children's rights and wellbeing at the heart of all they do with a relentless focus on getting it right for every child. Senior leaders and staff understand the context of the school very well. They use data very effectively to understand the impact COVID-19 and periods of remote learning have had on children's wellbeing and progress in learning. The headteacher rightly prioritised recovery planning to improve children's wellbeing and close gaps in learning resulting from the pandemic. Staff now have a well-developed, shared understanding of how wellbeing impacts on a child's ability to learn as a result of these focused improvements.
- Beith Primary School's well-established values of respect, nurture and inspire are reflected in the positive ethos throughout the school. Children and staff demonstrate the values daily through their interactions and behaviours. Teachers refer to them during class experiences to reinforce high expectations. Children learn in a positive and calm environment where all adults support them well. Through regular assemblies, senior leaders link school awards to the values to support children to see their relevance to daily life. Senior leaders have plans to review and refresh the vision and values, involving all stakeholders, to ensure they remain relevant to the current context of the school.
- The headteacher provides highly effective strategic leadership across the school. She is ably supported by the senior leadership team, which ensures consistent and clear direction. Senior leaders involve staff fully in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for development through a rigorous self-evaluation process. They use data very well to identify areas for development as well as to monitor the impact of agreed changes. As a result, almost all staff feel their views and contributions are valued. They have a clear understanding of their school improvement journey and have ownership of improvement priorities.

- Senior leaders have created a culture of shared leadership with a focus on continuous learning and improvement. They create opportunities for leadership at all levels with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Teachers talk very positively about the ongoing opportunities for quality professional learning. They deliver professional learning for their colleagues, such as nurturing approaches, to ensure capacity is built across the staff. This approach is having a positive and sustainable benefit to the whole team.
- Teachers engage regularly with professional reading and research to improve further their understanding of how children learn. As a result, they plan and deliver well-considered changes to the curriculum. This has led to children who show increased engagement and motivation during learning. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to review and improve approaches to learning and teaching. This will help them identify the activities and routines that are having the biggest impact on children's progress.
- Senior leaders place a high value on the views of all stakeholders. They use feedback from children, staff, parents and partners to inform school improvement priorities. Senior leaders ensure that key messages about the school's improvement journey are made very accessible to children, parents and partners through visual displays. They share regularly with the Parent Council the progress they are making with agreed priorities. A few parents would welcome increased opportunities to hear about changes to curriculum approaches and the impact these have on children's progress. Overall, most stakeholders talk very positively about the impact the school is having on outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders and teachers analyse a wide range of data to identify school improvement priorities. Currently, the school improvement plan has a clear focus on raising attainment and improving children's wellbeing. Senior leaders and teachers use evidence-based research to make informed choices about changes to resources and approaches. They monitor the children's progress with evidence that shows identified children are making very good progress as a result of planned interventions. Senior leaders and teachers use this data to adapt or change approaches, ensuring they continue to meet children's needs.
- Most children say staff value their views about how they learn. Senior leaders are responsive and take seriously the priorities for improvement identified by children. Children take part in a range of leadership groups which have clear objectives to support school improvement. This approach, across key improvement areas, is helping to enhance children's experiences. For example, children talk articulately about how their views have been supported by senior leaders to begin to improve the toilets. They are currently campaigning for improved changing facilities for physical education (PE). The School Improvement Committee recognised that their peers did not always look after the loose parts within the playground. They presented at assembly to remind others to use equipment responsibly which resulted in improved use and care of the equipment. Older children talk about the purpose of leadership groups and know the impact they have on the school. Teachers should support children to recognise the skills they develop as a result of these opportunities. Younger children would like more opportunities to be involved purposefully in school leadership groups.

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

- Staff create and maintain a nurturing and inclusive ethos at Beith Primary School. Senior leaders have a strong commitment to children's rights which underpins the school's vision and values. Staff are very supportive of one another and treat each other with trust and respect, providing positive role models for children. Positive relationships are evidenced through the kind and nurturing interactions between staff and children. Overall, children support their peers well and are friendly and welcoming to visitors. Almost all children are proud to be part of their school.
- In almost all lessons, children engage very well with their learning. They listen attentively, contribute articulately to class and group discussions, and demonstrate independence and initiative during tasks and activities. Teachers plan opportunities for children to make choices in their learning and access resources to support them to experience success. Children demonstrate resilience when learning new concepts and know how to access support if required. A few children would benefit from more challenge in their learning to enable them to apply learned skills to more challenging contexts.
- In almost all lessons, teachers ensure explanations are clear and concise. They involve children in talking about what they need to do to be successful and refer to this throughout the lesson. Teachers support children to see the relevance of their learning to the world of work. Teachers should now make the skills children acquire as a result of their learning more explicit. This will help children to make increasing connections with skills for learning, life and work.
- Teachers provide verbal feedback to children throughout lessons to support them to identify their next steps. Children use self and peer assessment very well to identify successes and where there could be improvement. They engage in this process with maturity, providing appropriate comments to support their peers. Teachers should allow time for children to consider feedback given, using this to review their work and make improvements. This would also support children to improve the presentation of their work.
- In almost all lessons, teachers plan a range of appropriate experiences that are matched well to the needs of individuals and groups. They support children who face barriers to their learning very effectively to ensure they can access activities and experience success. In most lessons, teachers use very skilled questioning to help children clarify their thinking and check understanding.
- Teachers use digital tools very well to enhance learning and teaching across the curriculum. For example, they use digital tools to provide visual prompts to help children understand new concepts and key teaching points. Children demonstrate independence and initiative when using matrix bar codes and online journals to support their learning. Classroom assistants

support individuals very well to access and use digital tools to improve engagement in their learning.

- Staff carry out a range of assessments in literacy and numeracy at key points throughout the year and use the helpful school assessment calendar to guide them. They work together effectively to analyse information and data gathered from a range of formative, summative and standardised assessments. As a result, senior leaders target resources and deploy support staff very effectively to support the needs of individuals and groups. Staff work together to evaluate the impact of targeted interventions. Senior leaders use this information to make informed decisions about priorities for improvement.
- Senior leaders support staff very well to use assessment data effectively to inform planning and identify appropriate next steps for children's learning and progress. Staff currently work with cluster colleagues to ensure a shared understanding of standards and expectations across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Teachers are developing further, school-based moderation to ensure progress and continuity of descriptive writing skills across all stages.
- There are consistent approaches to planning learning across all curriculum areas. Teachers plan together across stages and levels and are responsive to children's interests and needs. They plan lessons based on CfE experiences and outcomes and evaluate progress using National Benchmarks. Teachers across the school engage in professional learning using educational research to plan developmentally appropriate learning experiences for children.
- Children in P1 to P3 learn through a well-considered play pedagogy approach. Staff across the early level have a sound understanding of national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'. They consider carefully the balance of child-led and teacher directed experiences ensuring activities meet the needs of individuals and groups. Staff use a range of environments very well to engage children in their learning and apply learned skills to different contexts.
- Teachers in P4 to P7 are at the early stages of implementing a skills-based approach to learning. Staff across the stages work very closely to ensure children receive high quality learning experiences, regularly adapting activities to meet children's needs.
- Teachers have developed a range of learning environments beyond the classroom, enabling children to practise and transfer skills to different contexts. These approaches are having a very positive impact on children's engagement and motivation to learn. Children demonstrate increasing independence and resilience during their learning. As planned, teachers should continue to reflect on the balance between adult directed and child-initiated experiences as children progress through the curriculum. Children should have increased opportunities to revisit and reinforce key concepts in literacy and numeracy. This should support all children to sustain and improve their concentration during teacher directed activities.
- The school has effective processes to check children's progress. Senior leaders meet formally with teachers on a termly basis to discuss children's attainment. Together, they identify those children who are not making expected progress and plan suitable interventions and support to help address any gaps in their learning. Teachers take very good account of children's individual circumstances and use relevant information gathered when discussing children's progress and achievement. Senior leaders use a range of assessment evidence and teacher judgements to monitor children's acquisition of skills across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers recognise the need to develop this practice across all other areas of the curriculum. This should help all children learn and progress further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use well-developed learning pathways across all curriculum areas, taking account of experiences and outcomes and National Benchmarks. There is a strong focus on the four capacities. Children at all stages are learning to consider their responsibilities and contributions as citizens in their school and wider communities. Teachers planning enables children to learn about sustainability, diversity and global citizenship. Staff invest time in reviewing curriculum pathways to ensure that core resources align with key milestones in learning. This ensures they continue to meet the needs of identified groups within the school community.
- Staff work in partnership with other agencies to enhance and enrich the curriculum for children. They have established a wide range of partners both professional and community based. Senior leaders place great value on community involvement in the ethos and life of the school. Partnerships are sustained, productive and contribute to the ongoing improvement of the school's curriculum.
- Children learn Spanish and French as part of their modern languages programme. Children's learning is progressive, taking account of prior learning. In addition, there is a whole school focus on Scots language throughout January. Children in all classes apply their knowledge of Scots vocabulary in an annual poetry competition.
- All children receive their weekly entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education, planned around the local authority progression frameworks. Physical education lessons are taught by class teachers who make good use of the school hall and outdoor areas.
- Children have increasing opportunities to learn outdoors. The headteacher and staff use additional funding well to develop spaces and increase outdoor learning resources. This is helping children to apply their learning to different contexts and environments.
- Children and staff work with the local library, accessing the Education Resource Service regularly, to continue to improve the school library and class reading areas. Children speak positively about gathering tokens to access books online and this is having a positive impact on their interest in reading. The librarian leadership group have responsibility for maintaining the school library and take this very seriously.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Most parents value the regular communication through newsletters, the school app and learning conversations provided by the school. They feel they have a good understanding of key events within the school and the learning their children experience. Parents comment positively on the very caring, approachable and supportive school staff, referring to the strong community spirit. Staff ensure children and families receive support when needed, such as free school uniform from the uniform shop, or food parcels.
- Almost all parents feel that staff treat their child fairly and with respect and they receive helpful feedback about their child's learning. Overall, parents feel that teachers and senior leaders respond quickly to resolve any issues or concerns. This helps children to trust the adults in school and feel listened to.
- The Parent Council engage with the school well and regularly fundraise to support opportunities for children to take part in social experiences. They support school improvement priorities and apply for grants to provide quality resources to improve children's learning experiences.

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

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 have created an environment that is warm and welcoming. The vision of 'A Family of Learners' is demonstrated in the positive relationships across the school. Staff share a nurturing and supportive approach which is leading to confident children who are engaged in their learning. They are sensitive in their interactions with children and take time to listen, using their knowledge of individuals to provide appropriate support. Classroom assistants, teachers and senior leaders are proactive in supporting children's wellbeing from informal chats to planned interventions. As a result of these strong relationships, most children report they feel safe in school and have someone they can talk to.
- Senior leaders and teachers are committed to developing a rights-based education with children's rights permeating all aspects of school life. Children and staff achieved their reaccreditation of a Gold Rights Respecting School award with children demonstrating a very good understanding of different rights. Children are very respectful towards adults and peers and are rightly proud of their school. They look out for each other and nominate others for 'random acts of kindness', to promote kind and caring behaviour.
- Staff and children understand the importance of wellbeing. They use the shared language of the wellbeing indicators effectively to discuss their needs. Children understand different activities contribute towards improved mental health. For example, they talk about the positive impact developing friendships, caring for others, looking after your body and physical activity have on improving their wellbeing. Children have daily emotional check-ins to reflect on their wellbeing with staff providing appropriate support. This is supporting children to talk about how they are feeling.
- Senior leaders and teachers use a range of wellbeing assessment tools to track children's wellbeing across the school. For example, they use surveys, wellbeing indicators and assessments for children with barriers to learning. Teachers, through effective analysis, ensure appropriate interventions and support are in place for identified children. Senior leaders demonstrate the positive progress children make as a result of planned support. Staff identified that key groups of children often find it more difficult to engage in literacy and researched this area. They created a leaflet for parents which provides practical information and useful guidance.
- Senior leaders plan regular training for staff on nurturing approaches, trauma informed practice and restorative conversations. They work closely with educational partners to plan interventions to meet the needs of children, such as enhanced transition and outdoor learning experiences. Staff use nurturing approaches very well which is improving children's ability to moderate their behaviours and emotions when upset. Support staff and teachers are skilled in their use of de-escalation techniques and calm interactions for children who require this support. As a result of these supports, children feel safe and cared for in school.

- Teachers use a health and wellbeing pathway to ensure breadth, depth and consistency when planning learning experiences. Their planning includes opportunities for children to learn about healthy food and take part in food technology using the cooking pod. Children are highly motivated when taking part in cooking lessons and develop practical skills when handling food. The school should now consider developing a food policy, which considers current nutritional regulations. This should support consistent and progressive food and nutrition learning outcomes across the school.
- 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 the school meals provider.
- Children in P1 enjoy access to outdoor learning throughout the day. They make good choices in their learning and develop a range of skills, including assessing risk, through their play. Children across the school have regular planned opportunities for outdoor learning. Teachers incorporate loose parts play to develop creativity alongside more structured outdoor learning activities. This approach is helping to provide opportunities for children to problem solve and demonstrate teamwork. Children are highly motivated by these experiences and use the skills they are developing well in class-based learning.
- There is a clear staged intervention process in place for children who require additional support with their learning. The headteacher arranges 'team around the child' meetings with parents, partners and school staff to ensure children's needs are met. They consult children about the support they provide. Senior leaders review children's progress and interventions regularly to ensure outcomes are met. All staff have a very good understanding of and interest in the needs of children and manage these in a sensitive way. Children are clear about the support that is in place for them and know how to access additional support if required. Children across the school experience success and are improving their progress in learning as a result of these well-considered interventions.
- Children are very interested in learning about differences and diversity and understand why this is important. Nurture staff support children to promote an understanding of care experience in the school community through assemblies. Staff have been proactive in building a relationship with a national charity to support and develop this work. They have taken part in professional learning which has improved staff confidence to explore sensitive issues with children. Staff support children very well to appreciate difference and respect the values that others may have.
- Staff have taken positive steps to reduce the cost of the school day for all families. They offer support to families through the uniform swap shop, community food bank and support towards trip costs when appropriate. Staff have developed strong links with a range of partners in the local area who support the school's community food bank. Children take part in a successful intergenerational project using gardening as a link with the local care home. They litter pick to improve the school grounds. These important connections give children a strong sense of purpose and pride in their community.

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, children's levels of attainment are very good. For session 2021-2022, most children attained appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading and writing. Almost all children attained national levels in listening and talking and numeracy and mathematics.
- Senior leaders and staff track the progress of groups and cohorts of children carefully. Most children with additional support needs are making very good progress towards their learning targets. Across first and second levels, children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment and are closing the gaps that arose as a result of the pandemic.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in literacy.

Listening and talking

- Across all levels, almost all children are articulate, listen respectfully to others, and negotiate with each other well during group tasks and play activities. Children on track to achieve early and first levels ask and answer increasingly challenging questions about texts, identifying the main idea. At second level, almost all children ask and answer questions confidently to deepen their understanding of new topics. They listen carefully to select key information from different media sources to create their own texts. Across the school, a few children need more opportunities to present and share their learning to different audiences.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children use taught sounds to blend and decode simple words. At first level, most children use context clues to predict what might happen next. They skim and scan texts to find information and know the key features of fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, almost all children have clear preferences for books they read for pleasure and can talk about the core skills they are developing to summarise texts. Most children locate and integrate information from multiple fiction and non-fiction sources. Across the school, children access a range of quality books through the school library, digital devices and class reading areas. Children across the school now need more regular practice in reading aloud to different audiences to increase and improve fluency and expression.

Writing

- At early level, most children produce detailed line drawings and, with support, write sentences using capital letters and full stops. At first level, the majority of children use verbs and adjectives well to enhance their writing. By second level, most children use a wide range of punctuation and organise ideas logically in paragraphs. They discuss the skills they develop when writing across different genres. Children at all stages now need to improve their handwriting skills and to have increased opportunities for extended writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. Children across the school apply their numeracy and mathematical skills well across the curriculum. For example, children count seeds or measure areas for raised beds in the outdoor garden.
- Across the school, children need more opportunities to revisit taught numeracy and mathematical concepts regularly to deepen and consolidate their learning.

Number, money and measure

- Children on track to achieve early level count on and back confidently by adding on or taking away one. A few can add two numbers beyond 10 using concrete materials. They link daily routines to simple time sequences and are beginning to identify time to o'clock. Children on track to achieve first level identify successfully the place value of numbers to 1000. They can select accurately the most appropriate instrument to measure length and weight. Children are less confident when working with units of measure for capacity. At second level, children work with negative whole numbers confidently. They can calculate percentages of a quantity to find discounts when shopping. They are confident in telling the time using digital and analogue clocks. At second level, children require further opportunities to divide whole numbers by a single digit.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school, children recognise, sort and identify the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes at a level appropriate to their age and stage. At early level, children name a few properties of two-dimensional shapes such as curved or flat face. Children at first level can plot accurately the location of an object on a chart using two figure grid references. They know that a right angle is 90 degrees. At second level, children can explain the properties of different triangles such as isosceles, scalene and equilateral. They use their knowledge of angles and compass points to follow directions successfully.

Information handling

- Across the school, children gather, organise and display information using a range of charts and diagrams. At early level, children organise objects into simple patterns using their knowledge of colour and shape. At first level, children use their knowledge of Venn diagrams well to present information across the curriculum. Children at second level understand the probability of given events happening. They interpret information and draw conclusions from bar graphs and pie charts by asking and answering questions. Children at first and second levels are less confident in using digital technology to create and interpret information from spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders and staff have a very clear overview of children's attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. During the COVID-19 pandemic, children's levels of attainment dipped significantly in literacy and numeracy. In response, staff implemented a range of well-planned interventions for targeted children to raise levels of attainment very successfully. Staff continue to identify and close gaps across curriculum areas to ensure children's progress and attainment increases.
- Across the school, children make very good progress in all curriculum areas. As planned, staff should now track children's progress and attainment across all curriculum areas with the same rigour as literacy and numeracy.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All staff recognise children's achievements and encourage them to develop their own skills. Children share their achievements during assemblies, in wall displays and online with families. They enjoy receiving 'WHOOSH' awards for achievements outside of school. Senior leaders track children's achievements in sport and are now resuming whole school tracking of children's wider achievements. They ensure that no child is at risk of missing out.
- Children share their skills and talents with others through presentations, videos and oral recordings. This is building their confidence and communication skills very well.
- Children enjoy a range of leadership and school committee roles and participate in after school clubs and competitions. This is developing children's skills for learning, life and work very well. A next step is to develop a progression of skills framework which will help children to articulate the skills they develop.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher uses PEF very well to provide highly effective targeted interventions in literacy and health and wellbeing. All children who had gaps in language acquisition and sentence construction made very good progress as a result of intensive interventions through a language programme. At first level, almost all children who were not making the expected progress in reading are now working within expected levels. This accelerated progress is as a result of small group support to improve fluency and comprehension. All identified children who found the class setting challenging, now have increased attention and listening skills. As a result of these targeted interventions, children are making accelerated progress and closing their identified gaps very successfully.
- All staff know children and their families very well. They take steps to reduce the cost of the school day sensitively to protect the dignity of individuals. For example, they provide a free uniform shop, Christmas gifts and food parcels. They assist families to access resources and agencies that can provide the right support.
- Senior leaders have robust procedures to monitor and improve attendance and late coming. They offer regular and practical support to any family where this is impacting on children's learning. They operate a nurture breakfast club and early entry policy which offers families flexibility.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Staff in Beith Primary School have been proactive for several years in working to support children who are care experienced. They worked closely with a national charity to engage in research and attend training about care experienced young people. This has given staff a real insight and knowledge of how to support children who face additional barriers to learning and to ensure the school community understand differences and the challenges some children face. Children have a very good understanding of difference and diversity through their work on children's rights and their wellbeing. They are comfortable talking about why it is important to acknowledge, appreciate and celebrate differences. Care Experienced Champions present information to the school at assemblies and meet regularly to have their voice in school decisions. The staff team have shown a real commitment to reducing barriers to learning and supporting children across the school to meet their needs.

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.