

# Summarised inspection findings

**Pentland School**

North Lanarkshire Council

8 September 2020

## Key contextual information

Pentland School is a non-denominational, special day school for primary-aged children with additional support needs, predominantly social, emotional and behavioural needs. The school is located in Coatbridge and caters for children from across North Lanarkshire Council. At the time of inspection, the school roll is 28 with all learners being boys. The school has recent permanent appointments of a headteacher in May 2019 and a deputy headteacher in August 2019.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**satisfactory**

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

- Led by the headteacher, the senior leadership team (SLT) consulted staff, parents and children in developing the school's vision, values and aims. There is an aspiration that all children receive high-quality learning and teaching within a respectful and caring environment that values individual's rights. The SLT has a good understanding of the context of the school. They take a lead role in promoting the vision, values and aims across the school.
- Current school improvement priorities link well to the National Improvement Framework and local authority priorities. All priorities now need to have clearly identified and measurable outcomes, based upon evidence and the school context. All staff need support to evaluate the impact of their actions on children's progress with their learning and wellbeing. Evaluation of progress made in relation to the previous year's improvement priorities is not in place. The SLT now need to ensure they report fully on, and evaluate, improvement priorities, then use their evaluations, data and information to inform future priorities.
- Most staff contribute towards taking forward improvement priorities, with a few in a lead role. The SLT and staff have worked together effectively to improve day-to-day practice and should continue with their plans to develop a more strategic approach to school improvement. In doing so, the SLT should identify ways for all staff to engage in robust dialogue using available improvement information.
- The SLT undertakes a range of systematic monitoring and tracking activities across the academic session. This is beginning to create an improved understanding by staff of the impact of recent changes to procedures, expectations and practice. Monitoring and tracking activity currently focuses on forward planning, classroom support visits, attainment discussions, jotter sampling and an overview of a range of wellbeing assessments. Teachers engage in regular professional dialogue with the SLT through classroom support visits and tracking meetings, focusing on children's progress in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. This is promoting teachers' self-reflection and better evaluation of practice.
- Teachers access a range of planned, professional learning activity and use this well to develop classroom practice. Staff identify that a recent team building activity has improved significantly, their morale and developed a more consistent approach to children's engagement. Parents

recognise the recent improvements made within the school and the more supportive relationships between staff and children.

- The school is making improvements in how children contribute to improvement activities. Children are participating in class based pupil voice groups. In these groups, children create an agenda, discuss matters relevant to them, offer opinions and seek responses from the SLT. In each class, children consider ways to improve the school environment and create class charters.
- The school has a clear rationale for the use of the Pupil Equity Fund. The SLT has prioritised activities and interventions leading to improvements in children's health and wellbeing. The SLT need to measure effectively the impact of the activities and interventions employed.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Most teachers adopt a range of purposeful learning and teaching strategies well to motivate and engage children in their learning. In most lessons, children work conscientiously through tasks and activities. They respond positively to well-planned, organised, structured learning activities. Most teachers incorporate a variety of learning approaches including independent tasks, collaborative working and a mix of practical and desk-based activities. A few lessons are over-reliant on teacher-led dialogue. This is resulting in a few children becoming disengaged in their learning and disrupting others within their group.
- Across the school, almost all teachers and additional support need assistants (ASNAs) have positive, caring relationships with children. Within each classroom, they help children to feel safe, included and confident in seeking support with their learning when required. This supports most children to overcome any anxieties they may have and be ready to engage purposefully with their learning. Teachers need to ensure that they maintain high expectations of what learners can achieve and provide sufficient challenge at all times. Children should have more opportunities to lead their own learning.
- Most teachers and ASNAs support and encourage children well to participate in learning activities. If a child becomes anxious or distressed, most staff use a range of strategies well to promote positive behaviour and help children to re-engage with their learning. Led by the SLT, staff need to support children better during unstructured periods of the school day. Children often struggle to behave well during breaks, lunchtimes and whole school gatherings. This can lead to children engaging in risky, unsafe behaviours which result ultimately in negative incidents and unnecessary conflict. Staff need to increase their levels of supervision at breaks and lunchtime. Children and their peers need to be supported further to play and interact in a positive way. This is required to help minimise any potential harm or bullying during these times and support smoother transitions back into class.
- Children experience valuable learning activities across the four contexts of learning. Through the options initiative and bespoke programmes of learning, children are participating in learning experiences tailored to their individual needs. Children exercise personalisation and choice, follow pursuits they find enjoyable and try a range of new things. They engage well in a wide range of practical activities, vocational pursuits and outdoor learning experiences, often working with community partners. Teachers need to ensure these activities are more carefully planned, progressive and focus more clearly on developing children's skills.
- Children's learning is being enhanced by the effective use of digital technology and outdoor spaces. This is evident across a number of curricular areas including mathematics, science and religious and moral education. Staff recognise there is still a need to develop further these contexts for learning.

- The majority of teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment approaches well to make judgements about children's progress with their learning. The majority of teachers are using questioning techniques and personalised success criteria well to help measure children's understanding. All teachers need to ensure that professional judgements of children's progress are not overly-influenced by standardised test results. They should continue to develop their understanding of assessment to measure accurately children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers have made a promising start to using National Benchmarks to help assess children's progress and achievement. As planned, they need to use the benchmarks to monitor progress and support their professional judgement of when a learner has achieved a curriculum level. Teachers need to ensure they use the benchmarks for assessment purposes and not as a tool to plan learning. The school should work to increase opportunities for teachers to engage in moderation activities with colleagues from other schools.
- Teachers track and monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They meet regularly with the SLT to discuss children's attainment and progress. This provides useful information on children's strengths and areas requiring further support. They should now develop ways to measure children's progress and raise attainment across all other areas of the curriculum.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff use local authority learning pathways effectively to plan children's learning in literacy and numeracy. Staff use school based planning pathways in other areas of the curriculum, such as interdisciplinary learning. Teachers' planning within learning pathways primarily takes account of the class group and is not based on individual needs. Across the school, staff are at the early stages of developing progressive learning pathways across the curriculum. They should continue to develop an agreed curriculum rationale and a cohesive whole school curriculum that takes better account of the specific needs of children.
- A few children follow individual programmes aimed at meeting their specific social and emotional needs. These include play therapy and virtual schools. A few children work well with third sector organisations to support their engagement in educational activities. These programmes and interventions allow children to participate in activities that support their emotional needs. The SLT should monitor the impact of these interventions to ensure these are resulting in sustainable, positive outcomes for children.
- Children do not currently receive their full entitlement to a broad general education. They do not receive a minimum of two hours of quality physical education each week. As they develop the curriculum, staff should ensure that all children receive their learner entitlements as detailed in national guidance. Curriculum development needs to include a stronger focus on equality and diversity to enable children to develop an understanding of all groups within society. Staff should also implement outdoor learning approaches to ensure all children have opportunities to experience high-quality learning in this context.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents have a good understanding of the vision, values and aims of the school. They feel that all staff make them welcome, show them respect and listen to their views. Parents are not yet aware fully of how the school is taking forward improvement priorities and how they can contribute to school improvement. The SLT needs to involve parents more fully in school improvement.
- Parents feel welcome and speak frequently to the SLT within the school. They get regular updates on their child's progress across the academic year. As a result of recent improvements, parents speak positively about their child's progress in school. Additionally, parents have observed improvements made to their child's social awareness and capacity to cope in less familiar situations. Parents believe that improvements to the school building and outside areas are still required to better meet the needs of the children.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

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



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

weak

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 are able to talk about how they are improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the majority of children. They support children well to understand what they need to do to keep healthy and safe. For example, children are developing strategies to manage their emotions if they are experiencing anger or frustration. Children believe their emotional wellbeing is improving as a result of opportunities to discuss their feelings. Staff should collate this information about children's progress in health and wellbeing to enable them to identify strengths and areas for development.
- Children contribute to decisions about their wellbeing. They are involved in agreeing personal targets and have regular opportunities to discuss their progress with staff and at review meetings. Children have an appropriate understanding of the wellbeing indicators. The majority of children use these well to assess their own strengths and needs. Children learn about the range of emotions they can experience and how to talk about these emotions. They are able to use strategies well to manage negative emotions such as taking time away from specific situations.
- Staff have an appropriate awareness of the individual health and wellbeing needs of children. Information in Getting It Right For Me (GIRFME) plans detail and identify accurately children's strengths and needs using the wellbeing indicators. Information in GIRFME plans about achievement of targets require more detail to enable a better understanding about the progress children are making.
- Across the school, relationships between children and staff are supportive. Most staff have a sound understanding of the needs of children and use this information well to support their social and emotional needs. ASNAs are skilled in helping children re-engage with their learning when they are anxious or distressed.
- Appropriate behaviour support plans are in place for all children. They detail effective strategies to de-escalate incidents of challenging behaviour. In recent times, the number of incidences of physical intervention has reduced.
- The school is not yet able to provide information about the number of incidents of challenging behaviour between pupils. They need to record this information using the Bullying and Equalities Module on SEEMIS. Staff need to monitor and analyse incidents rigorously to determine potential antecedents and contributory factors. Together with staff, the SLT would benefit from support from the education authority to improve how they recording and analysis of bullying and challenging behaviour, with a particular focus on reducing the number of incidents.

- The majority of children say they feel safe in school and that staff helps them feel safe. Most children say that staff treat them with respect. A few children say that they do not feel safe in school and that the school does not deal well with bullying. Staff should support and supervise children at all times in order that they feel safe. They have identified that conflict between children often occurs at break times. Staff at all levels need to work together to minimise conflict and create an environment in which all children are able to play safely.
- A few children follow individual timetables that include specialist interventions such as Forest Schools. The SLT, with staff, should continue to review these interventions to determine if they provide children with challenging learning experiences that lead to improved attainment. For a few children, a significant part of their learning takes place in isolation. A few children attend the school on a part-time basis and a few children have very low attendance. Staff need to continually review each individual child's programme. Every child should be included in the life of the school as much as possible and provided with opportunities to learn and socialise with their peers.
- Staff have recently assessed children's social, emotional and behavioural needs. They use information well and in collaboration with children, appropriate targets are set to address identified needs. As planned, staff should reassess regularly children's needs to determine progress and next steps.
- All staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to statutory requirements. Staff understand and implement the education authority child protection approaches. There is a need for staff to work with the education authority to clarify the correct use of chronologies to record significant events.
- Staff have received professional learning in the use of physical intervention and restraint. Education authority guidelines set out clearly the statutory guidance in relation to physical intervention, challenging behaviour and exclusions. The SLT should ensure that in line with this guidance, exclusions are used a last resort, for as short a time as possible and children are supported at home for the period of the exclusion. The number of exclusions has increased significantly in the past few months. Staff need to improve approaches to promoting positive behaviour in order to reduce the high number of exclusions. When children are excluded, the school should provide children and families with appropriate educational support for the period of the exclusion, in line with education authority guidance.
- The SLT is working with children, staff and parents to create an inclusive and supportive ethos in the school. As a result, the environment for learning is becoming calmer with better opportunities for most children to access learning. However, there is a need to continue to work towards ensuring all children are fully included in all aspects of learning. Staff should continue to support children to understand all aspects of equality and diversity and ensure they demonstrate respect for others.
- Staff have an understanding of the socio-economic factors that impact on children and their families. The school received approximately £38,000 from the Pupil Equity Fund. This funding has been used for play therapy and to provide additional staffing. Staff should now evaluate the impact of these interventions to determine if they are leading to improved outcomes for children.

## 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

- Based on a range of evidence provided by the school, and taking account of additional support needs, most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English. A few children are making good progress and a few are making limited progress, particularly with their writing. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics, with a minority making good or very good progress.

### Literacy

#### Listening and talking

- Most children are able to listen to others during planned and structured class activities. They can confidently share their point of view across a variety of contexts. In the majority of classes, children are respectful of other's views, take turns and contribute well to discussions. Most children respond well to staff and offer positive responses to questions. A minority of children can transfer their listening and talking skills to real life situations or less structured activities. A majority of children need further support to develop their skills in turn taking, being respectful and cooperating with others.

### Reading

- At early level, almost all children can read letters and are developing their knowledge of sounds. They enjoy listening to stories read to them by staff. A majority of children can read familiar texts using knowledge of sounds and letters to read the words. At first and second levels, most children are reading aloud to a small and familiar audience with growing confidence. They can select texts that are of interest to them and identify key information and the main ideas of those texts.

### Writing

- Overall, most children are writing well across a range of curriculum areas. A few children use digital technology well to write short stories and record thoughts and ideas. At first and second levels, most children create texts for a variety of purposes. For example, writing letters to put forward their views and opinions to local councillors and recording information while researching a topic. With support, the majority of children can plan and organise their thoughts and ideas. Children across the school need to develop further their spelling strategies to write both familiar and less familiar words.

### Numeracy

- At early level, children have a good understanding of number to 20. They identify confidently number patterns and use their knowledge to successfully complete addition calculations. Children are beginning to gather and sort data well using tally sheets. At first level, children are able to perform additions and subtractions using single and double-digit numbers. They can

use a range of times tables to perform multiplications and calculate divisions. They identify confidently and use the correct notation for simple fractions and round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. A minority of children can identify and name three-dimensional objects and explain the qualities of edges and vertexes. Most children can identify the value of coins and use these to calculate the cost of a group of common things they might purchase.

- Children need to develop further their numeracy skills, particularly in problem solving and information handling.

### **Literacy and numeracy across learning**

- Across the school, teachers need to plan and develop ways for children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across other areas of the curriculum. There are missed opportunities for children to apply their learning in unfamiliar, real life contexts, especially during the options programme.

### **Attainment over time**

- Staff are supporting most children to raise their attainment and achievement, improve their attendance and overcome barriers to learning. As a result, most children are making progress in their attainment over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The majority of children have the potential to raise their attainment further. Staff need to improve how they track children's progress with their individual targets and personal achievements. A next step for the SLT is to produce a coherent overview of whole-school progress and thus identify better areas of strength and aspects for further development.
- Most children maintain high levels of attendance at the school, however, the very high exclusion rates for some are having a detrimental impact on those children's attainment and achievement.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Children learn important skills for life and work through participating in a wide range of activities in the school's 'options programme'. These activities include cookery, computing, arts and crafts, and construction. Children develop their digital skills, knowledge of health and safety in the workplace and the ability to work independently and as part of a team. Partnerships and community providers often support these activities including Motherwell Football Club. Children develop their health and fitness and participate in sports including swimming, boxing, golf and rugby. The school needs to plan, track and monitor children's progress better to ensure children are aware of the skills they are developing and how they can progress further.
- In recent times, a few children have achieved a Sports Leader Award and The Prince William Award. The school has introduced John Muir Trust Awards this session and plan to accredit achievements using the High Five Award next session. The school also recognises and celebrates children's achievements within the school through 'Star of the day' and classroom displays. The school should continue to seek ways to accredit children's achievements.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Pupil Equity Fund has been used to introduce activities and programmes aimed at supporting children to improve their health and wellbeing. This has led to most identified children improving their attendance and beginning to raise their attainment in literacy and numeracy. The SLT need to measure more effectively the impact of Pupil Equity Fund initiatives on identified children.

- The school supports children well in their transition to secondary school. Careful planning accounts for individual needs. Additionally, parents are involved in the planning process through meetings and visits to the school to meet key staff.

## School Empowerment

### ■ Staffing

- The SLT plays an active role in building staff capacity to meet better the needs of children. For example, all staff benefit from a range of professional learning opportunities designed to improve wellbeing outcomes for children.
- The SLT continues to work with partners to ensure additional and appropriate expertise is resourced. For example, the deployment of play therapy for children who, through assessment, would benefit from this intervention. The SLT is empowered to use monies allocated through Pupil Equity Fund.

## 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.