

Summarised inspection findings

Kirkshaws Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

11 February 2025

Key contextual information

Kirkshaws Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the Kirkshaws area of Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 188 children over eight classes. There are currently 33 children on the nursery roll. The headteacher has been in post since August 2024. She is assisted by one principal teacher and one acting principal teacher who has been in post since September 2024. Approximately 25% of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 1. As at September 2024, 37% of P6-P7 pupils were 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	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Across the school children are polite, friendly and happy. They interact respectfully with adults and with one another. Most children demonstrate well the school values of respect, resilience, honesty, friendship and trust. Children give examples of the importance of the school values, for example, in how they learn and play with each other. Overall children are enthusiastic about learning and are proud of their school.■ Senior leaders and staff know children very well and demonstrate care and consideration for children as individuals. Relationships within the school, between both staff and children, among children are positive. Classrooms are calm and settled. Most children respond and behave well in this supportive and welcoming environment. Children have developed class charters through learning about children’s rights. These are displayed in all classes.■ Senior leaders have provided staff with expectations around the classroom environment, both in terms of displays and in universal supports, such as use of visual timetables. This is not yet consistent across all classrooms. Staff should continue to develop purposeful and supportive learning environments, involving children in this process.■ Children speak positively about the ‘Fun 31’ time which gives them choices about how they can enjoy their right to play. Groups of children meet with senior leaders regularly to discuss their learning and ideas through ‘Focus Fridays’. This is beginning to provide opportunities for children to share their ideas. Senior leaders should continue to ensure that children are aware of the influence of their views and opinions on the life and the work of the school.■ Most children engage actively in their learning. They listen well to instructions which are clear in most lessons. Children feel confident to ask for help from their teachers, and they are supported well in their learning by a caring support staff team. In a few lessons, when teacher explanations are overly long, children can become disengaged.■ In almost all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning with children. In a few lessons this is referred to and used throughout the learning activity. Children would benefit from	

teachers being more explicit about the ways children can be successful. In most lessons, questioning is used to check for understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to challenge and extend children's learning. Children receive positive feedback from teachers. This now needs to be more focused on learning to enhance and support children's progress. Across the school, children are not yet using self- and peer-assessment regularly to support their own learning and that of others. This, along with other formative assessment strategies, should be a focus moving forward.

- Across the school, there is limited use of digital technology. In a minority of lessons, teachers use interactive boards effectively. At early level, children are learning to use digital devices to support and enhance their learning through the use of matrix barcodes. At second level children learn about online safety and cyber resilience. At second level, children with barriers to their learning have started to use technology to support their literacy learning. Staff now need to use technology more consistently to better support children and enhance their learning across the school.
- Teachers are at the very early stages of implementing play-based learning at P1. Teachers now need to develop learning environments to ensure they support effective learning and teaching through play at the early level. Staff across the early level should work together to develop a shared understanding of high-quality play. This should include engagement with national practice guidance to develop skills and understanding about the benefits of play-based learning.
- Staff are developing their understanding of using the outdoor environment as a context for learning. While children at all stages have opportunities to learn outdoors, this is not yet of a consistent frequency or quality across the school. Senior leaders should now support staff to develop a more consistent approach to learning outdoors.
- Overall, while there are a few areas of strength, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable and not yet of a consistently high standard. The school's learning and teaching framework sets out clear expectations for high-quality learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff should now review and use the framework to improve the quality of teaching across the school. As part of this, teachers should ensure a focus on quality questioning and feedback which will help children to be clear about their own progress and next steps. This will help children to take a role in leading their own learning.
- Teachers use an agreed calendar of standardised assessments for reading and numeracy. This is beginning to help teachers to use assessment information more effectively as a baseline to inform teaching and learning. Staff now need to build on this approach and ensure listening and talking and writing are assessed effectively across the school.
- Teachers meet termly with the headteacher to discuss planning and to track children's progress in learning. As part of this tracking and monitoring, the headteacher has introduced a stronger focus on use of national Benchmarks. Staff should continue to engage with the national Benchmarks regularly to make more accurate judgements about children's progress.
- Teachers plan appropriately using a range of local authority progression pathways and school-based programmes of coverage of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. The new headteacher recognised the need for teachers to plan collaboratively at each stage. This is beginning to support teachers to moderate standards and to plan more effectively to meet the needs of children in their classes.

- Teachers worked with colleagues in the local area last session to moderate their expectations of children's progress and their understanding of achievement of a level. They should continue to work with staff from other establishments to support their own professional learning and to help them to judge children's progress more accurately.

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

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Most children at early and second levels, and the majority of children at first level are on track to achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy. A few children are capable of achieving more in their learning. The majority of children who require additional support with their learning are making satisfactory progress towards their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children at early and second level are making good progress in literacy and English. At first level, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress. In writing, a minority of children at first and second level are capable of achieving more.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children communicate confidently with each other and adults. At early level, most children listen to instructions and respond appropriately in class and group settings. At early and first levels, a few children become disengaged when listening during whole class activities and need support to engage in learning. At second level, most children talk with confidence and expression. They summarise well a text they have listened to. Across the school there is a need to focus on approaches to assessing children's listening and talking to ensure accuracy about the progress children are making and their next steps. Overall children would benefit from more opportunities to present for a range of purposes and audiences.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children read aloud from a known text. Almost all identify a variety of common words and use their knowledge of sounds to decode unfamiliar words. At first level, children read with increasing expression. They identify punctuation in text and describe how this guides the reader. At second level, most children summarise their reading and make predictions, for example, in what might come next in a story or in the mood of a character. Children at first and second levels, name a small number of authors they enjoy. They would benefit from increased opportunities to choose texts for enjoyment and to consider different authors and texts.

Writing

- Children at early level, use their knowledge of letters and sounds to form words. Most are beginning to use their knowledge of words to form simple sentences, with a minority able to write these independently. At first level, most children use capital letters and full stops in most sentences. At both first and second levels, children now need to consolidate their skills in writing, and to achieve depth of learning in one genre, before moving onto the next genre.

Overall children would benefit from a more consistent approach to teaching and assessing writing across the school.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children at early and second levels, are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children at first level are making satisfactory progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count up to 10 and beyond and match numbers to objects accurately. At first level, most children confidently round numbers to the nearest 10. They add two- and three-digit numbers but are less confident with subtraction and solving simple word problems. Most children working towards second level accurately record time in 24-hour notation. They accurately calculate area and perimeter of shapes and make links between fractions, percentages and decimals. They are less confident calculating the percentage of a number.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and sort common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. At first level, the majority of children recognise 2D shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are less confident with compass points and finding right angles. At second level, most children use mathematical language to name and describe different types of angles such as acute and obtuse. They identify complementary angles.

Information handling

- Children at first level extract key information from a variety of data sets including bar graphs and tables. Children at second level interpret information and draw conclusions from graphs with accuracy. Overall, children across all levels would benefit from developing data handling skills further, including through real life contexts and using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The recently appointed headteacher has taken initial steps to help staff improve their understanding of individual and groups of children's progress and attainment over time. This has included a strong focus on use of national Benchmarks to assess progress. This is helping to ensure children's learning needs are identified and targeted. As planned, senior leaders should support teachers to have a stronger understanding of a range of data to maximise children's attainment and progress over time.
- The headteacher tracks children's attendance on a monthly basis. Attendance levels have improved in recent years. At the time of inspection just under one third of children's attendance was less than 90%. Low patterns of attendance are impacting on attainment for a few children. Senior leaders should continue to promote the importance of attendance, taking appropriate targeted action to support improvements in attendance for identified children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated in a range of ways, including through social media, newsletters and certificates which are given at assembly.
- Children participate in activities which supports the development of their skills for learning, life and work. For example, older children have leadership roles as monitors, house and vice captains. A few children lead sports clubs for younger children. Children benefit from access to a wide range of lunch time and after school clubs led by staff and children. Through these clubs children learn a range of skills, for example knitting, dance and football. Senior leaders track children's participation to ensure children who are at risk of missing out are supported to

take part in activities. Children are not yet clear about which skills they are developing as a result of their participation in clubs and wider activities. Staff should now support children to make a link between these roles and the skills they develop as a result.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff understand the social and economic contexts of the school community. They have strong relationships across the community which they use to mitigate against financial barriers, for example accessing opportunities for wider achievements and trips. Staff are mindful of the cost of the school day and sensitively support families in a range of ways, including with access to pre-loved uniform and other clothing.
- In recent years, Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to provide additional staffing to decrease class sizes and support targeted interventions. Senior leaders have some evidence of the impact of interventions in improving attainment in literacy for identified children. Going forward, the headteacher should consider using a wider range of data to identify poverty-related attainment and other gaps. This will help identify approaches and interventions which will make the biggest impact on accelerating children's progress and attainment. It will be important to ensure ongoing evaluation of the impact of PEF spend.

Other relevant evidence

- Children receive their entitlement to two hours of quality physical education each week.
- Children learn French across the school and have some opportunities to learn Spanish. Senior leaders should ensure all children receive their entitlement to 1+2 languages.
- All children do not currently have opportunities to borrow books from the school library. Senior leaders should progress with plans to refresh the school library which will help promote a culture of reading for pleasure.

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.