

# Summarised inspection findings

Hillhead Primary School

East Dunbartonshire Council

23 April 2024

## Key contextual information

Hillhead Primary School is a non-denominational primary in the town of Kirkintilloch in East Dunbartonshire. The headteacher has been in post since 2019 and is supported by an acting deputy headteacher and a principal teacher. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 82 children across five classes. Four of these classes were composite groups with the exception of Primary 3.

The majority of children reside in deciles 1 and 2 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Attendance is currently below the local and national average at 89%. There have been no exclusions recorded in the past two years. Twenty eight percent of children are recorded as having an additional support need.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experience for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

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

- The headteacher and staff have worked well with partners, parents and families to develop a culture of care and respect. Staff have created a very nurturing environment which supports children's readiness to learn. Children benefit from strong, trusting relationships between each other and with staff who work with them. They feel safe and respected.
- Children in almost all classes learn in environments which are numeracy and literacy rich. They are proud of the many examples of their work displayed across the school which create a sense of belonging. Most children are eager participants in their learning and engage actively in lessons. Most teachers take a variety of approaches to their teaching, for example using group work, digital technology and outdoor learning. This is resulting in most children being motivated to do their best and sustaining their engagement in learning. This is demonstrated by children in most classes where there is very little disruption to learning and the environment is calm and purposeful.
- Teachers provide a range of learning experiences for children which are enjoyable and engaging. In most lessons, the pace of learning is appropriate for most children. There are a few children who would benefit from additional challenge in lessons. This would ensure that they are able to make better progress and further increase their motivation.
- Almost all children behave politely and respectfully across the school. The behaviour demonstrated across the school by almost all children is based on the school values. Any challenging behaviours are dealt with sensitively and positively by all staff. This includes, for example, restorative discussions, one to one support and time out of class where necessary. These interventions result in more positive behaviours and minimal disruption which enables children to engage well in their learning. Local authority officers work with the school and

individual children where necessary to support children displaying any behaviours which are negatively impacting on their own wellbeing or the wellbeing of others.

- Most children interact well with their peers and enjoy working effectively together in pairs and small groups. This supports their learning well. Most children understand clearly the purpose of learning. Teachers share with children what they need to do to be successful in a lesson. An important next step would be for teachers to reference these more regularly during lessons so that children can monitor their progress. Children would also benefit from co-creating measures of success with teachers so that they fully understand how to be successful.
- Teachers use digital technology well to enhance learning experiences for most children. Children capture images using digital devices as part of their everyday learning, research key topics and ideas and prepare digital presentations to share their learning. They capture their learning digitally and share this successfully with their parents through an online platform. Staff's ongoing development of this work should ensure that digital technology is fully embedded in daily classroom activities.
- Most children are able to influence their learning through teachers regularly asking children about what and how they want to learn. Teachers provide a range of well-planned, structured and relevant activities which support most children to take responsibility for their learning and increase their independence. Staff should continue to work closely together to further develop strategies to support all children to lead their learning.
- The headteacher and staff should work together with families to further develop a culture of increased ambition and aspiration for all children. This will further support the development of children's self-esteem, self-worth and confidence.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. They use questioning well to promote increased curiosity in children and encourage them to be confident in their responses. All staff should now revisit the ways in which the further use of skilled questioning could be developed to improve children's higher order thinking skills.
- Children are able to articulate the skills they are developing in school. They can describe well what skills they are learning including for example, communication, teamwork and problem solving. Senior leaders and staff are working towards the development of a progressive skills framework. This should better support children to develop and apply their skills further in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Children are well supported with their learning when they move from nursery to P1 and through to P3 with staff taking a play-based approach with children. Children are provided with a wide range of learning through interesting play experiences. Staff provide children with activities which help to ensure an appropriate balance between adult-directed and child-led experiences. Children are able to make choices about their play and follow their interests which results in learning which is relevant and meaningful to children. Staff should continue to develop the role of the adult to ensure that children learn and make the best possible progress through their play.
- Teachers keep a close check on children's progress and identify where support is required. All teachers know children in their classes very well. Children who require additional support with their learning are supported well with their specific areas of need. All teachers identify promptly where children have gaps in their learning and where targeted interventions are required. Most teachers use verbal and written feedback effectively to talk to children about their progress and

their suggested next steps. Children have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their learning.

- Teachers collaborate well to plan learning and assessment for children that are well structured. They ensure learning is appropriate to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels of the multi-composite classes they teach. Teachers use a range of frameworks and programmes of learning well to plan learning which aligns to CfE experiences and Outcomes. These have been adapted to meet the needs of learners across the school. They use Scottish Standardised National Assessments to assess children's progress and identify gaps in children's knowledge and skills. Most teachers use formative assessment strategies well to inform their day-to-day teaching.
- All teachers develop learning targets collaboratively with children. These are displayed clearly in most classes across the school. Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to discuss and review children's progress and attainment. During these valuable meetings, staff identify children who face particular challenges or barriers to their learning. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used effectively to fund effective interventions for a number of children in order to meet their learning needs as a result of these discussions. These include pupil support staff in classes to support the learning of targeted children and children's involvement in reading programmes to extend their literacy skills. Senior leaders should consider ways in which support for learning assistants, and those working most closely with children with additional support needs, can contribute to these meetings.
- Teachers make professional judgements about the progress of children which are reliable and validated through quality in-house moderation activities. Senior leaders should now work closely with the local authority to extend opportunities for all staff to engage in robust moderation activities with other schools.

## 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, children's attainment is satisfactory. The majority of children achieve expected national standards in listening, talking, reading, writing, numeracy and mathematics. Children who require additional support with their learning, make good progress from prior levels of attainment.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- The majority of children make good progress in listening, talking, reading and writing from prior levels of attainment. More children need to make better progress.

### Listening and talking

- The majority of children listen well to information and instructions from adults and each other. At early level, children enjoy talking to peers and share and recall what is important to them. At first and second levels, the majority of children listen well to each other. They put forward ideas and views confidently on a range of topics including their interests. At second level, most children contribute well to class discussions on various subjects. At all levels, more children need to improve their skills in listening and talking, particularly those not attaining expected levels, particularly in listening to the views and opinions of others.

### Reading

- At early level, the majority of children recognise sounds, letters and simple words. They use their skills to 'read' familiar stories. A majority of children at first and second levels are confident readers. They share class novels with visitors, reading aloud extracts with expression to sustain the listener's attention. At first and second levels, the majority understand topics and key features in texts and relate these appropriately to other classwork. Children have clear views and opinions about books, sharing their likes and dislikes. They understand different types of texts and their purposes. At first and second levels, children who require additional support make good progress. A few children at these levels need to develop their confidence and skills in reading aloud in front of their peers.

### Writing

- At early level, the majority of children are developing key skills in writing. They form simple sentences and are beginning to use appropriately capital letters and full stops. At first level, the majority write well for different purposes, including poetry, reports and stories. They enhance their writing with interesting vocabulary and grammar to engage an audience. At second level, the majority of children write well for different purposes, often using metaphors, similes and other key features to improve their work. However, not all children at first and second levels present their work well. Children need to be more consistent in organising and structuring their

writing, paying more attention to handwriting, grammar and punctuation. Across the school, more children need to continue to develop further their skills in writing for different purposes.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, a majority of children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics from prior levels of attainment. More children need to achieve expected standards, in particular at first and second levels.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, children order numbers forwards and backwards to 20. They continue to make progress in learning to add and subtract within 20 with support. At first level, most children understand place value and round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They use the correct notation for fractions and order them with accuracy. A few children are not yet confident in mental agility and need to develop their skills in this aspect. Most children at second level have a good understanding of number and number processes. They read and convert times in 12- and 24-hour notations and apply it accurately to problem solving. They are not yet confident in working with decimals, percentages and fractions.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, most children understand and use positional language. At first level, children name and classify a range of two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They describe their properties using appropriate mathematical language. At first level, most children use positional language appropriately, including describing turning and direction. At second level, most children describe confidently 2D shapes and 3D objects using specific vocabulary. They identify the nets of 3D objects. A few children are not yet confident in working with angles. They need to develop their knowledge of compass points and angles to follow and record directions.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, most children gather information for a variety of purposes. At first and second level, most children interpret data and answer questions correctly from a range of bar graphs and tables. Across the school, children are not yet fully independent in gathering and interpreting data through the use of digital technology.

### **Attainment over time**

- In recent years, children's attainment has improved with the majority of children on track to achieve expected levels in literacy and numeracy. In particular, most of the children have their improved significantly their attainment over the past two years in reading and writing. Children's attainment has been affected significantly due to the impact of COVID 19. However, most children now make good progress from prior levels of achievement.
- Senior leaders and teachers do not yet gather accurate information on children's attainment over time across curricular areas other than literacy and numeracy. The headteacher needs to build on existing systems and include accurate judgements on children's progress and attainment in all curricular areas to ensure that children make suitable progress.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Children are proud of their achievements, including those out with school. They like these being celebrated regularly at school assemblies, on displays, when wearing 'Big Deal Lanyards' or being awarded the 'Kindness Cup.' Children are developing key skills in teamwork and resilience through a range of experiences, including the school's football team. They are acquiring important life skills, including leadership, through undertaking different roles on the pupil council and health and wellbeing group. At P7, children describe well the improvements in

their skills in communication, engineering and sport, through the recent residential in Lockerbie House.

- Children are developing their understanding of being active citizens through visits to the local care home where they entertain residents. Their involvement in the Lego club and attending different literacy events with their parents enhances their skills in literacy and numeracy. Older children know what qualities they need to be confident leaders through class or school activities. Children's achievements have a positive impact on their progress. Senior leaders and staff now need to track children's skills and achievements, including those from clubs and outside school, in order to identify strengths or support those who may be missing out. School attendance is below local and national averages. However, children's attendance at school is improving as a result of staff taking forward various initiatives. Staff have opened up the breakfast club for all children. As a result, more children attend and have a positive start to their school day. Staff are working well with families and other agencies to help children attend school and overcome any barriers. Senior leaders and clerical staff take prompt action when children do not attend school as expected.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The headteacher and staff have a deep understanding of the school's context. They take prompt action to address any potential barriers or challenges which children and families may face. Senior leaders consult parents and staff about how PEF funding is spent to best meet the needs of children. The headteacher uses PEF effectively for additional staffing, resources, trips and school clubs. Experiential learning for children, including widening their life experiences, is lessening the impact of poverty. This includes taking children out of school to experience a range of unfamiliar environments. Children's health and wellbeing, behaviour and attainment is improving as a result.
- Individual children are making good progress in achieving personal targets through relevant interventions, including being involved in the 'reading school.' The attainment of these children is accelerating and the attainment gap reducing. Their attainment in reading has also improved as a result of staff's interventions and an increased focus on developing further their skills. Children are improving their skills in writing and the attainment gap is reducing. In both reading and writing, the majority of children now achieve expected national standards. Staff review regularly the impact of their interventions to identify successes. They take action and make informed changes when needed to improve further children's attainment and progress. The headteacher now needs to continue to gather accurate information on the impact and success of interventions on children's progress.



## Other relevant evidence

- All children receive two hours of high-quality PE each week. This is providing children with opportunities to explore aspects of their physical wellbeing.
- All children learn about Religious and Moral education in classes, developing their awareness of faiths and cultures.
- Children experience lessons in language, with a focus on French. The school should ensure that all children are able to experience learning in a second language in line with the national expectation.

## 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.