Summarised inspection findings

Williamston Primary School

West Lothian Council

5 December 2023

Key contextual information

Williamston Primary School is a large, non-denominational school serving the area of Murieston in Livingston, West Lothian. A number of children attend from outwith the catchment area. The school is part of the James Young Cluster. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 422 set across 15 classes. The school is led by the headteacher who is supported by a depute headteacher and principal teacher. The leadership team took up post in January 2020 following a period of significant change. In recent years the school has undergone refurbishment works. The school is predominantly open plan.

Within the school, a minority of pupils are Free School Meal entitled with the majority of children attending the school residing within SIMD 9. Thirty-six percent of learners have English as an Additional Language, with 36 different languages spoken. Eighteen percent are identified as having additional support needs or requiring more help to make progress in their learning. Overall school attendance is above the national average.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	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	

■ Senior leaders and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to children's rights in their work. Across the school relationships are positive and interactions between staff and children are warm, caring and nurturing. Staff know children very well and use this knowledge to support children calmly and sensitively. As a result, almost all children feel safe and supported by trusted adults.

■ Teachers refer frequently to the school values of respect, responsibility, and kindness during learning activities. Most children can talk about class charters and how they helpfully remind them of the school's values and expectations. Most children demonstrate these effectively. A minority of children would benefit from greater staff support to ensure all classrooms are calm and purposeful environments for learning. This should support all children to achieve the school's vision of "Being The Best You Can Be."

■ Pupil voice and pupil participation activities ensure that children can share their views on a range of topics and feel confident that their views are listened to. They are proud of their diverse school community and enjoy learning about each others' languages and beliefs.

■ Across the school, teaching is underpinned by the school's values. Led by senior leaders, staff have worked together well to develop a helpful framework of what high-quality learning and teaching should look like in Williamston Primary School. In the majority of lessons, children find learning most engaging when provided with quality learning experiences that are appropriately challenging, enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests. In a few lessons, children

need more support to extend their attention on tasks and activities. Increased expectations from teachers will support children better to take responsibility for their learning and achieve what they are capable of. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff to encourage greater flexibility and creative approaches in learning to ensure that all children benefit from consistent, high-quality experiences at all stages.

■ In most classes, teachers share the purpose of lessons effectively with children and encourage them to identify what success would look like. As a result, most children can talk about their learning well. In the best lessons, teachers revisit success criteria to check children's understanding of the learning. They make use of a range of verbal and written feedback to help children identify the appropriate next steps in learning. Most teachers use a range of questions effectively to check for understanding, extend children's thinking, and support them to relate their learning to real life contexts. As a result, staff are beginning to support children to understand their skills and their connection to the world of work.

■ Most children work well independently. In a few classrooms, children use task boards to keep on track in their learning activities and maximise the time teachers can spend teaching groups within the class. Across the school, a minority of children would benefit from more opportunities and additional support to work more effectively in pairs or groups. This will support them to develop better their ability to share opinions and ideas.

■ Almost all teachers make effective use of technology to enhance their teaching. Children use tablets and laptops confidently to reinforce learning and practise skills in numeracy. They can explain how they use these to undertake research tasks and access digital applications confidently to help them complete set tasks in class. A few children talk confidently about their coding and programming work.

■ Staff recognise the value of outdoor learning and use the school grounds and local community effectively to extend and deepen children's learning across the curriculum. Children use the local environment to survey the range of insects and minibeasts living in the school grounds. They explore angles as part of maths, using digital devices to capture photos of different sized angles in the playground. Helpful progression pathways are beginning to support children's ability to learn about play and sustainability. They are providing more motivating opportunities for children to develop their curiosity in real life contexts. As a result, children are beginning to understand how they can contribute more effectively to the local community. Staff should continue to embed the revised play and outdoor learning strategy across the school to ensure children across all stages receive high quality progressive experiences.

■ Senior leaders and staff use a range of tracking tools to gather information to evidence the progress children are making in their learning at key points throughout the year. Learner profiles and WOW jotters help capture children's successes and progress in their learning. This provides valuable data for teachers and senior leaders to develop an overview of children's progress. Senior leaders should continue to work with teachers to deepen their understanding of shared standards and expectations of national benchmarks and ensure that assessment information supports better the planning of next steps for all children and builds more consistently on prior learning. This will help them to track more accurately the progress all children are making across the curriculum. Senior leaders should consider how these systems can be more streamlined to provide relevant information about the learning journeys of all children.

■ Teachers meet regularly with senior leaders and support staff to discuss all children's progress. These meetings help to identify children who require additional support or increased challenge in their learning.

■ Across the school, and in most classrooms, displays are effectively helping children to see the outcomes of their work and the progress they are making. Most children have opportunities to develop their skills in assessing their own work and that of their peers. Most teachers provide praise through written and oral feedback to children. Staff should continue to develop their skills in providing more evaluative feedback to help children understand their progress and what they need to do to improve.

■ Teachers have implemented a more robust framework for planning learning, across the school. Teachers work together to plan learning across different timescales and track progress, making use of progression pathways. Recently introduced responsive planning is being used well by teachers and is beginning to increase learner engagement. This is providing children with meaningful opportunities to contribute to planning their learning. Teachers should continue to use planning pathways and continue as planned to develop more flexible, creative, responsive planning relevant to all learners. This will help ensure all learners are fully engaged in high-quality learning experiences.

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	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, most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. A minority of children are making very good progress. In June 2023, almost all children across P1, P4 and P7, attained expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Across the school, a significant minority of children would benefit from further challenge in their learning.

■ Overall, almost all children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards their individual learning targets. A few children make very good progress.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Across the school, overall attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children attain expected levels in reading and writing. Almost all attain expected levels in listening and talking.

Listening and talking
■ Children who have achieved early level participate actively in songs and rhymes. They can answer questions about a known text. They need support to generate rhyming words and ask questions about texts they have heard. Children who have achieved first level listen and engage with other children appropriately during group discussions. They can respond to literal questions but are less confident when answering evaluative questions. Children who are on track to achieve second level contribute ideas and opinions during class and group discussions. They show respect when listening and make efforts to support and extend the contributions made by others.

Reading
■ Children who have achieved early level use their knowledge of letters and sounds to attempt to read unfamiliar words. They read known texts aloud with attention to punctuation and can relate stories to their experiences. They now need to develop their knowledge of the features of non-fiction texts and how they can find out information about a specific topic. Children who have achieved first level use punctuation and grammar to read fluently and can explain their preference for different types of texts. They can answer literal questions but need support to use contextual clues to understand the meaning of unknown words. Children now need to develop their understanding of the difference between fact and opinion and to recognise the important link between reading and writing. Children who are on track to achieve second level can read with fluency and expression, using appropriate pace and tone. They recognise different techniques that an author uses to engage the reader and can name and exemplify these. Children need support to develop further their ability to create different types of questions about a text and to identify the most reliable sources of information. Across the school, children access class and school libraries and use reading apps. Children now need to engage more with a wider variety of texts, both paper-based and digital, within and outwith the

classroom. This will help to support better a reading culture and accelerate reading progress across the school.

Writing

- Children who have achieved early level use finger spacing appropriately and can punctuate at least one sentence with a capital letter and full stop. They use their knowledge of sounds to make positive attempts at spelling familiar words. They write regularly for a range of purposes. They now require support to form lower case letters correctly. Children who have achieved first level make notes to help plan writing and can use them to create new texts. They include relevant information in their writing but need to improve their use of punctuation. Children who are on track to achieve second level use paragraphs to structure their writing and can use appropriate layouts. They are developing their use of a range of punctuation and sentence openers. Children at first and second levels now need to improve the presentation of written work and ensure that they check spelling when reviewing their writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children are working beyond nationally expected levels.

Number, money and measure

- Most children across the school have a good understanding of place value. Children who have achieved early level order numbers correctly within the range of 0-20. They can add and subtract to 10 with accuracy. A minority of children need support to form numerals correctly. Children who have achieved first level compare the size of fractions and accurately place them in order. They can explain the role of the numerator and denominator. They need to develop their understanding of area. Children at first and second levels investigate the importance of numbers in learning, life and work. Children who are on track to achieve second level, add and subtract multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 to and from whole numbers. They understand perimeter and are confident at working out the area of common shapes. They need to develop their skills in calculating the volume of cubes and cuboids.

Shape, position and movement

- Children who have achieved early level use positional language effectively. Children who have achieved early and first levels name an appropriate range of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects correctly. They are not yet able to use mathematical language to describe their properties with confidence. Children who have achieved first level identify right angles in the environment correctly. They need to develop an increased awareness of grid reference systems. Children who are on track to achieve second level use mathematical language accurately to describe and classify angles. They are unfamiliar with the diameter and radius within circles.

Information handling

- Children who have achieved early level use knowledge of colour, shape and size correctly to match and sort items. Children who have achieved first level use tally marks to record information accurately. Children on track to achieve second level devise ways of collecting data in the most suitable way for a given task. Overall, children across all levels would benefit from developing data handling skills further, including through real life contexts and digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders and teachers track the attainment of individuals and groups of children in literacy and numeracy closely. Senior leaders have a sound understanding of the reason for dips in attainment in specific year groups. They have put effective support in place to address this. As a result, in the majority of current cohorts, attainment levels in literacy and numeracy

have remained constant or increased over time. As a next step, they should now track children's progress across the curriculum.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children across the school are developing teamwork and communication skills well through worthwhile groups such as the Pupil Council and the Neurodiversity Squad. These groups successfully raise awareness of important issues across the school community. Older children speak enthusiastically about school leadership responsibilities. They are proud of their valuable contributions to the life of the school. These are strengthening children's confidence and sense of responsibility. Most children take part in activities in school beyond the classroom and achieve success through these. They enjoy success in competitions, sporting events and participation in national awards. Through these experiences they are developing resilience and organisational and presentation skills.

- Children take pride in their achievements both in and out of school being highlighted throughout the school on attractive displays, in assemblies and on social media. Success is shared further through WOW jotters and on digital platforms. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to track children's participation in school clubs and wider activities. This will allow them to identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out. Teachers should continue to support all children to identify the attributes and skills they develop through participation in all achievement activities. This will support children further as they set and evaluate learning targets, and develop transferable skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have taken positive steps to reduce the cost of the school day for children and families. They have initiated a uniform and 'dress-up' recycling service within the school and reduced or negated the cost of clubs, trips and activities. Staff are also mindful of the need to ensure fundraising activities are proportionate. They should continue to develop further these approaches which are supporting equity of opportunity for all.

- Leaders have used Pupil Equity Funding appropriately to finance a range of targeted and universal interventions to support literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. Staff use data effectively to track the progress made by individual children. Most children who are impacted negatively by their socio-economic circumstances are on track to achieve national expectations of attainment. A minority are making very good progress in literacy, and a few are making very good progress in numeracy. Senior leaders should now ensure they can evidence more clearly the impact that funded interventions have on accelerating the attainment of specific groups of children.

Other relevant evidence

■ All children follow a programme of religious and moral education at all stages of the school. Most children engage well in developing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and world religions alongside developing their own beliefs and values.

■ All children have access to the correct amount of high-quality physical activities and sports across the school week. This is planned effectively and progressively with children engaging in learning with enjoyment and enthusiasm.

■ Senior leaders should continue to take forward discussions of Coordinated Support Plans (CSPs) in relation to their statutory duty. This will ensure that all children identified as meeting the criteria and those who are "looked after" are discussed and the next steps clearly identified. There is potential to include this in already established and regular meetings held around children.

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.