

Summarised inspection findings

West Coats Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

26 March 2024

Key contextual information

West Coats Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in Cambuslang, South Lanarkshire. The original school, now a listed building, opened in 1896. The building was extended in 2003 and refurbished in 2015. The building now combines a modern learning environment with the original Victorian building.

Three hundred and ninety-seven children currently attend the school over 15 classes. The headteacher took up post in August 2023. She is supported by two deputy headteachers and a principal teacher.

Attendance figures are in line with the national average. A majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas 7 to 10, just over 25% live in decile 10.

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

- Children at West Coats Primary learn in a calm, nurturing environment. They benefit from very positive relationships with their peers and adults across the school. Children are polite and demonstrate the school values of kindness and confidence in their interactions with each other, staff and visitors. Almost all children believe they are encouraged by staff to do the best they can.
- The headteacher established quickly effective systems for children to share their views and ideas with her. Children talk enthusiastically about the 'Wilbur post' and 'wee blethers'. Their views have impacted positively on the school's approach to learning about cultures, religion and beliefs. This includes the introduction of a prayer room for children to use for prayer and reflection. Children value the importance the headteacher places on their opinions, ideas and suggestions. As planned, she should build on this positive approach and provide further opportunities for children to improve learning experiences.
- The headteacher has prioritised rightly, planning opportunities for children to share their learning and engage with their community. Children have hosted music events, art exhibitions and class cafés. They are motivated and engaged in the life of the school through their participation in these well-planned events. Teachers should continue to develop the range of ways children can contribute to their community.
- Staff have taken significant steps to develop learning environments across the school. They have worked together to ensure classrooms are inclusive places for all children. All classes have calm spaces and resources are easily accessible to all children. This is helping children to become increasingly independent in their learning. The headteacher has developed very well a range of shared learning spaces across the school. Children enjoy accessing the new

library, circle room, treehouse room and family room. Teachers should now work together to explore further how they can use the range of spaces most effectively to enhance learning experiences across the curriculum.

- In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. Teachers share routinely the purpose of activities with children and the steps they need to take to be successful. Children are ready to be more fully involved in setting targets for their learning and identifying measures of success with their teacher. Across the school, teachers use praise well. A few teachers give children clear feedback on what they are doing well in their learning and what they need to do to improve. Teachers should work together to agree a more consistent approach to feedback. This should help children to understand clearly their next steps in learning.
- In most lessons, teachers plan tasks and activities that meet the needs of most children. They use a range of resources and provide support, including digital devices, to help children access their learning. Teachers use their time well to work with groups and individuals who require additional support with their learning. The headteacher is aware that a few children at each stage require greater challenge in their learning. She should continue to work with staff to ensure they plan learning that deepens and extends learning for those who are capable of achieving more.
- The Parent Council has worked with the school to increase the number of digital devices in each class. In addition, senior leaders have changed how digital devices are distributed across the school. This has enhanced greatly children's access to technology across the curriculum. Teachers use tablets and laptops effectively to enrich children's experiences. Children use technology well to take photographs, access online applications and carry out research tasks. At P7, children are creating their own podcasts. Teachers should continue to plan meaningful opportunities for children to develop their digital literacy skills as they move through the school.
- Teachers have taken positive steps to introducing play-based approaches in P1 and P2. They have engaged well with national practice guidance and professional learning, this is leading to a shared understanding of quality play experiences. Teachers have developed attractive spaces to provide opportunities for children to explore, solve problems and be creative. Staff are very reflective and recognise their successes and where practice continues to improve and develop. As they move forward, it will be important to look at the balance of teacher-directed, teacher-initiated and child-initiated experiences. This should help them to ensure all children experience the right level of challenge in their learning.
- Senior leaders have introduced an annual assessment calendar. This sets out clearly when and how teachers should use standardised assessments. Teachers use assessment information they gather effectively to plan future learning. They identify children who may require additional support with literacy and numeracy. A few teachers use formative assessment strategies well. In a few classes, children have regular opportunities to self-assess their work. Senior leaders should build on this effective practice. They should work with teachers to develop a more consistent approach to formative assessment across all classes. Teachers should develop high-quality assessments that allow children to apply their learning in new contexts.

- Teachers have engaged in professional learning in school to develop further their understanding of national standards in literacy and numeracy. As planned, teachers should extend their professional learning to include moderation activities with other schools. There is a need for them to make increasingly robust and reliable professional judgements about children's achievement of a level.
- Teachers have moved recently to a digital platform to plan learning. They use a range of progression pathways and frameworks well to plan learning experiences across the curriculum. Senior leaders should support staff to develop further this new approach to planning. They need to review the range of documents used to ensure experiences and outcomes support planning and national Benchmarks inform assessment.
- The headteacher meets with teachers termly to discuss children's progress. Teachers now use more reliable assessment evidence to support their judgements on progress and attainment. Teachers speak highly of the increased level of challenge at these meetings. This is helping them to identify clearly gaps in children's learning. Teachers use the information gathered effectively during these meetings to plan appropriate interventions and support. Teachers' engagement in these meetings is leading to them having an increased understanding of the school's approach to closing the gap for children who are affected by poverty.

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. Inspectors have identified good practice in child protection and safeguarding procedures.

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, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Across all stages a few children exceed national expectations. Attainment is strongest in listening and talking, with almost all children on track to attain expected levels this session. Attainment in writing is more variable across the school. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to raise attainment at P4 and P5 in both literacy and numeracy. Early indications show that targeted interventions are beginning to raise attainment.
- Senior leaders have strengthened approaches to raising the attainment of children with additional support needs. A wider range of universal, targeted and intensive support is now provided. As a result, most children with additional support needs are making good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children participate actively in songs, rhymes and stories. They listen well to stories read aloud. Children should continue to develop their ability to talk about stories they listen to. At first level, children listen and respond appropriately to others, for example by nodding and agreeing. They build on the contributions of others. They should continue to develop their note-taking skills. At second level, children work effectively in pairs and groups, building on the contributions of others appropriately. Children would benefit from more formal talking and listening activities, such as debates.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children hear and say single sounds. A minority of children use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. At first level, most children explain why they like certain books and authors. Children find key information in non-fiction texts using the content page and index. They ask and answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions about texts. They should continue to develop their use of expression when reading aloud. At second level, most children apply a range of reading skills and strategies effectively to read and understand texts. They should continue to develop their skills in identifying sources that are most useful or reliable.
- Children welcome the significant re-development of the school library and introduction of class Reading Ambassadors. The investment in new books is extending children's exposure to a range of texts to provide further challenge.

Writing

- Across all stages, the overall quality of the presentation of written work is good. At early level, most children write for enjoyment. They explore patterns and sounds through play and real contexts. At first level, children use appropriate vocabulary when writing a persuasive letter. They create texts for a range of purposes, such as recipes and instructions. Children should continue to develop their confidence to write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. At second level, children use notes to create new texts. They use appropriate vocabulary, including subject-specific vocabulary well. Children should continue to develop their ability to write at length.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children identify, recognise and order numbers within 30 with increasing confidence. At first level, a majority of children round whole numbers to 10 and 100. They carry out addition calculations with accuracy and are developing confidence in subtraction problems. At second level, a majority of children read, write and order whole numbers to one million. They identify contexts in which negative numbers are used. Children confidently identify the strategy used to complete a range of addition and subtraction calculations. At first and second level, children would benefit from further practice in working with fractions. At all levels, children would benefit from more practice carrying out calculations with money.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. Across first and second levels, most children name an increasing range of 2D shapes and three-dimensional objects and use appropriate vocabulary to describe their key features. At first level, children use a grid reference accurately to identify features on a map. At second level, almost all children use the words acute, obtuse and right angle to correctly describe the angles. Children would benefit from developing their knowledge and understanding of angles.

Information handling

- Children who have achieved early level create pictograms. At first level, most children use tally marks to gather data. They create and extract information from Venn diagrams. Children working towards second level gather information from a range of sources and display information in a table. Overall, children across the school would benefit from greater opportunities to develop skills in manipulating data to solve problems.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has made significant improvements to the strategic use of attainment data this session. Staff engagement in professional learning, moderation, and quality assurance activities has increased the robustness of teacher professional judgements. The successful introduction of a new local authority tracking system ensures staff have a comprehensive overview of children's attainment. Staff analyse a range of data for specific groups of children more effectively. For example, children with additional support needs or those who are care-experienced. As planned, senior leaders should now develop tracking and monitoring processes further to ensure interventions are specific, timely and impact on raising attainment.
- Senior leaders identified the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's progress in writing. A focus on the development of writing across the school is addressing this successfully.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements through regular assemblies, social media, class-based rewards and certificates. Children enjoyed the 'November Month of Arts'. They articulate well the range of skills they developed and how the project helped them to contribute effectively to the life of the school.
- Children take part in an increasing number of activities beyond the classroom. Senior leaders track and monitor participation in clubs and activities. This ensures that opportunities are available to all children. Staff should build on this to track the skills children are developing through their achievements and participation.
- Across the school, children develop strong leadership skills through their involvement in committees and groups. At Primary 5, children enjoy leading the 'Wilbur Post' system, ensuring they sort and deliver certificates and letters from the headteacher, on time. House captains are proud of leading work to choose a charity for the school to support this year. They volunteered in the charity shop to learn more about how the charity supports people in their community. Children now see themselves as valued members of their school and community.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders have strengthened systems in place to promote equity of success, opportunity and achievement for all children this session. As a result, there are clear indications that strategies in place to close the poverty-related attainment gap are accelerating children's progress, particularly in literacy. These strategies include targeted interventions, strengthened partnership working with parents and a rigorous approach to improving attendance.
- Almost all staff have a strong understanding of the school community. They use this effectively to inform their approach to equity. Senior leaders worked with the Parent Council and pupil council to agree a 'Cost of the School Day' statement. Staff use this to support sensitively the needs of individuals and families. The headteacher has improved significantly partnership working with parents to reduce barriers to participation and achievement. This has included the development of a large, comfortable and inviting family room.
- Pupil Equity Funding is being used effectively to close the poverty-related attainment gap in literacy. For example, through the provision of supported study, additional resources and digital technology. Numeracy interventions at P4 and P5 have reduced the attainment gap successfully.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher has developed highly-effective approaches to monitoring attendance and late coming. She quickly identifies children who may need support to attend school more regularly. The headteacher works with parents to create an attendance support plan. The plan includes factors impacting attendance, potential risks and the impact low attendance is having on outcomes for children. The headteacher and parents co-create agreed supports and interventions. As a result, attendance and late-coming has improved for most identified 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.