

Summarised inspection findings

Holy Family Primary School

East Dunbartonshire Council

20 December 2022

Key contextual information

Holy Family Primary School and Early Years Centre is a denominational school situated in Kirkintilloch, East Dunbartonshire. The headteacher has been in post since 2018. He is supported by two deputy headteachers. Currently the school has a roll of 346 children across 14 classes. A majority of children attending the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple deprivation (SIMD) areas 9 and 10. The school received £34,300 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) this session. The school was extensively renovated in 2017. There was significant COVID-19 related staff absence last session.

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

- Parents value the leadership team's caring approach and commitment to ensuring the school is at the heart of the community. Senior leaders have worked well together to manage the challenges of the pandemic. The headteacher and deputy headteachers now need to take on a more strategic role with a clear focus on accelerated progress for all learners. They need to harness the collective experience of the teaching team to drive further improvements. The headteacher should now review the remit of the leadership team to ensure they support staff collectively to lead and manage change.
- The vision and values reflect the Catholic ethos of the school. Children are aware of the values through the school prayer which they helped to create. Senior leaders should now review the vision, values and aims with all stakeholders. This will ensure the vision and values are relevant and meaningful to the entire school community. Senior leaders should use the refreshed vision and values to underpin the work and ethos of the school.
- Staff across the school know children and families very well. Teachers communicate regularly with parents to share information about children. This regular contact contributes to the effective relationships between school and home.
- Across the school, teachers are working effectively together as a team to continually improve their classroom practice. They are motivated and want the best for learners in their class. As teachers re-engage in peer observations and moderation activities, they are developing an agreed understanding of what highly effective learning and teaching looks like. Senior leaders now need to strategically lead this work to ensure improvements in practice are leading to raised attainment and achievement for all learners.
- All teachers engage in annual professional review and development. They link their targets to the General Teaching Council standards. A few teachers have identified an interest in undertaking professional learning to develop their leadership skills. Senior leaders are supporting them well to identify appropriate professional learning. Almost all teachers have an additional responsibility and a few have a leadership role within the school. As a result, they

feel valued and involved in the life and work of the school. Senior leaders should continue to build on this positive approach. They should review the roles teachers have to ensure their work supports progress towards the improvement priorities.

- The headteacher has created a three year overview to plan and manage school improvement. He recognises the need to review the improvement priorities ensuring they reflect the current school context. Senior leaders should also review approaches to self-evaluation. They recognise the need to establish clear systems to monitor the progress and impact of improvement work.
- Senior leaders are aware that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their approach to quality assurance. As they reintroduce quality assurance activities, they should work with staff to consider the purpose of each activity and how evidence gathered contributes to continuous improvement. The leadership team should ensure they make effective use of evidence gathered. This should strengthen their understanding of the quality of children's experiences and the progress learners are making. They should provide feedback to teachers with clear strengths and next steps to develop further their practice and improve outcomes for learners.
- Most children are able to join committees and groups that make positive contributions to the life and ethos of the school. The reading ambassadors and eco committee members talk positively about the events and activities they have been involved in planning. They are proud of their achievements. Children across the school are now ready to take more of a lead role within these groups and committees. They have the skills and abilities to contribute to long term improvements linked to the school improvement priorities. Children are ready to take a lead role in evaluating the work of the school.
- The Parent Council and Parent Association are very active within the school community. They raise funds and purchase equipment to improve the learning environment. The headteacher shares the school improvement plan with the Parent Council. Parents appreciate that the pace of change and their engagement with the school has been impacted by the pandemic. They are keen to become more involved in supporting the headteacher to drive forward change and improvement.
- The headteacher has used Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to employ additional staff. Moving forward it will be important to monitor and evaluate the impact of this resource in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

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 experience a positive and caring ethos at Holy Family Primary School. Relationships across the school community are positive, respectful and reflect the school's Catholic ethos. Children are polite and respectful to each other, adults and visitors to the school. In almost all classes, children interact positively with staff and their peers. Almost all children work well together in pairs and small groups. They are supportive of one another.
- In most lessons, children are motivated and engage well in their learning. Children are particularly motivated and respond well to learning outdoors and within the local community. Children talk positively about taking maths outdoors, visiting the local canal and a visit from the fire service. Teachers should continue to build on this positive approach providing further opportunities for children to learn in real life contexts beyond the classroom setting.
- Teachers have worked well together as a team to develop approaches to linking learning across different curricular areas. They plan opportunities for children to make choices about aspects of their learning. For example, children identify what they would like to find out more about at the start of new contexts.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. Teachers have created a learning environment which is bright, well organised and stimulating. Children talk proudly about examples of their work displayed around the school. Almost all teachers share the purpose of learning and most teachers help children to understand how they will be successful in their learning. Children across the school are ready to co-create success criteria, in their own words, so they fully understand what success looks like.
- Teachers deliver lessons which are well-structured. Most children experience learning that is well paced and provides opportunities for them to be independent in their learning. In a few classes the pace of learning could be increased.
- Almost all teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning and teaching. They use interactive presentations, games and video clips well to enrich children's learning. When they are available, teachers make effective use of digital devices such as laptops and tablets. Children requiring additional support for their learning access digital devices such as pen readers, laptops and tablets. As a result, children are overcoming barriers to their learning.
- A majority of teachers use questioning and feedback effectively to extend children's thinking and check for understanding. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to questioning and feedback. This should support children to develop a better understanding of what they are doing well and how they can continue to improve.

- At early level, teachers work well together to develop motivating spaces for children to play. Children are responding well to the opportunities they have to play. Teachers reflect continually on the quality of the provision and the positive impact this is having on children's learning, development and progress. Teachers interact well with children, encouraging independence and curiosity.
- Senior leaders have developed a whole school assessment calendar. Teachers use this to plan a wide range of assessments to be undertaken during the school year. The calendar offers teachers the flexibility to use other assessment approaches at appropriate times to support and inform learning and teaching. A few teachers make effective use of formative assessment strategies.
- Teachers use data from standardised assessments to inform their professional judgements on children's progress. Senior leaders and staff should now plan how this data can support improved planning. This should include planning targeted support and interventions for children who are not on track to achieve.
- Teachers engage in moderation activities across a stage. This is supporting them to make consistent judgements about progress and attainment. Teachers have rightly identified moderation as a priority following the restrictions of the pandemic. They are keen and enthusiastic to return to working collaboratively both within the school and with cluster colleagues. Teachers recognise the value in regular moderation to support them to plan relevant and appropriately challenging learning for all children.
- Teachers use the school planning format which ensures coverage of appropriate experiences and outcomes across all levels. They plan using agreed progression pathways for all curricular areas. Staff should review approaches to planning to ensure long, medium and short term planning meets the needs of learners across all curricular areas. They should ensure their planning processes provide opportunities for children to experience breadth and depth across the curriculum.
- Class teachers have helpful meetings with senior leaders three times per session to discuss children's progress and attainment. Senior leaders, with teachers, should now ensure that tracking of progress includes the evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions, analysis of data and joint planning of support to improve outcomes for learners.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use progression pathways across the curriculum. Senior leaders should support teachers to review and refresh these pathways. In doing so, they need to ensure all progression pathways support children to build on what they already know and make progress across the curriculum.
- In the last year, senior leaders have led effectively the development of new approaches to create a positive reading culture across the school. For example, developing reading corners in classrooms and purchasing new reading material. The school has successfully achieved the bronze level of an accredited reading programme. Staff should continue to build on this strong start, embedding and sustaining a whole school reading culture.
- All children benefit from learning outdoors. The school makes use of a wide range of outdoor learning environments, including a local woodland. Staff use the school grounds to provide positive opportunities to consolidate and extend children's learning. There are plans to develop further outdoor learning and to create a progressive pathway ensuring outdoor learning becomes an integral part of planned learning experiences.
- Children use digital technologies across learning for example, to undertake research and to develop presentation skills. Classes have timetable slots across the week to use devices. Currently the number of digital devices in school is limited. This is limiting opportunities for staff to embed the use of technology across the curriculum.
- Children receive their entitlement to religious education each week. The school has strong partnership working with the local parish community. All children learn French, with the opportunity to learn a third language as appropriate. Senior leaders should review timetables to ensure all classes receive two hours of quality physical education across each week.
- Parents and members of the local community contribute to the delivery of the curriculum through 'focus weeks' including, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Maths Week Scotland and outdoor learning. Children speak positively about these experiences. Through these opportunities, children are developing their understanding of skills for learning, life and work. As a next step, teachers should support children in recording the skills they are developing.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders have an open door policy and prioritise positive relationships with families. They have established a strong sense of community. Children and families who are new to the school believe they have been well supported during the transition. This ensures children are settled and happy at school.
- Parents value the annual ‘meet the teacher’ events. This allows them to build relationships with the staff at the start of a new school year. Senior leaders gather feedback from parents to adapt and improve parent information sessions. For example, a few events for parents of primary one children were combined following feedback from parents. Senior leaders should continue to work with parents to review and refresh these sessions.
- Post pandemic, the school is working hard to re-establish all of the activities within school that families enjoy. Teachers keep families informed through very regular use of social media about learning and achievement across the school. Photographs and film clips enhance this. Children talk positively about sharing their learning with their family.

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

good

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

- Children benefit from supportive and strong relationships across the school community. The school's promotion of Gospel values is evident in the children's respectful relationships with adults and each other. Teachers, staff, parents and partners prioritise the wellbeing and inclusion of children. Almost all children are confident in sharing their views about how adults support them effectively. Children share that supportive adults provide them with a very positive school environment. As a result, almost all children feel safe, welcome and well supported within all aspects of their school life.
- All children answer questions directly linked to the wellbeing wheel three times per year. Children reflect on their wellbeing indicating if they feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Children in P1 to P3 are supported effectively to answer questions using appropriate visual symbols. Teachers and senior leaders review and monitor all responses to the wellbeing questions. This helps staff to understand better the wellbeing needs of individual children. Staff ensure children who have identified wellbeing concerns are supported fully with timely interventions. The robust process of engaging children with meaningful time to reflect on their wellbeing ensures almost all children feel safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included in school.
- Senior leaders work well with external partners to enhance the curriculum to focus on children's spiritual, mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing. For example, church representatives support children and their families through sacramental preparation and strengthen children's connection with their faith. Active schools coordinators support children to participate in a range of sports.
- Families and external partners provide effective support to the school. They play an important role in supporting the children's sense of belonging to help to foster a strong sense of community. All children are respectful and demonstrate very inclusive behaviours towards each other and visitors to the school. Children speak positively about other cultures. As a result, all children experience a high level of trust and respect across the school community.
- Children learn about aspects of their health and wellbeing through assemblies, focused learning weeks and a range of activities and groups. These experiences have a focus on children improving their own health and wellbeing, valuing diversity and celebrating achievement. Although the school places a strong focus on the importance of pupil leadership groups, children could be more active in taking a lead role in developing intended outcomes and actions of the group. This would promote further children's influence on the work and life of the school and in becoming responsible citizens and effective contributors.
- All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to statutory duties. Senior leaders keep appropriate chronologies to track significant events and to monitor the impact of

interventions for children requiring additional support for their learning. The school has an effective system to identify and seek support for children who require additional support for their learning. These systems result in children and their families accessing timely additional support with almost all children feeling included in school.

- Care experienced children feel listened to and well supported by senior leaders and staff. Regular planning meetings between external agencies, parents and the school includes consideration of children's views. The caring approach adopted by all school staff impacts positively on care experienced children's relationships, attendance and engagement with their learning.
- Joint planning between senior leaders and teachers helps a majority of children overcome their barriers to learning. Children's plans identify well what specific needs children have. Parents are aware of decisions made about their child. They would value more opportunities to be involved in planning how their child is supported. Although all children requiring additional support have plans in place, it is less clear what impact interventions have for children. Children's progress in relation to planned targets requires to be evidenced better to ensure interventions are effective and lead to improved outcomes for all children. For a few children who require additional support to engage with learning, there is a need to ensure they engage with purposeful learning when in the class setting.
- Staff engage in a wide range of personal learning to support them to effectively support the needs of the children within the school. For example, staff are trained in developing emotional regulation and de-escalation strategies. These approaches to promoting children's regulation skills support almost all children to reflect on their feelings and understand how to resolve positively any concerns they have.

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 English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Attainment at second level is very good. School achievement of a level data for session 2021/22 shows attainment has returned to pre pandemic levels. At early level, most children achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing and numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children at early level achieved expected CfE levels in listening and talking. At first level, most children achieved expected CfE levels in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy and mathematics. At second level, almost all children achieved expected CfE levels in listening and talking, reading and writing. Most children at second level achieved expected CfE levels in numeracy and mathematics.
- Children make good progress through early, first and second CfE levels. A few children at each stage are capable of working beyond expected levels of attainment. A majority of children with additional support needs are making good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children are making expected progress. A few children at each stage could be achieving more in their learning in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children are articulate and most listen well in class. At early level, most children take turns during class discussions. At first and second level, most children confidently build on views of others during group work. Across the school, a few children need support to build their confidence in expressing their own thoughts and ideas.

Reading

- At early level, most children identify familiar single sounds. A few children are beginning to blend sounds to make words. At first level, children talk confidently about the texts they are reading. They use contextual clues to predict what might happen next. At second level, children access a range of texts and summarise them well. They use inferential skills well to answer questions about texts, videos and audio clips. The ongoing work on becoming a 'Reading School' will further support children to develop their reading skills across the curriculum.

Writing

- At early level, children are beginning to form letters correctly. They copy simple sentences written by an adult. Children at early level need to write on their own more often. At first and second level, children write across a range of genre. At first level, children create a range of short texts using a structured planning format. They spell most familiar words correctly.

Children write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. By second level, most children use increasingly complex sentences and a wide range of punctuation. They organise ideas logically in paragraphs. Children at second level are developing confidence in using onomatopoeia and similes to improve their descriptive writing. At first and second level, children need increased opportunities to write about topics that interest them.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making expected progress. A few children at each stage could be achieving more in their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children identify and recognise numbers from 0 to 20. They identify accurately missing numbers in a sequence. At first level, children identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. They round to the nearest 10 and 100. Most children convert confidently between 12 hour and 24 hour time. Children working within second level work confidently with numbers up to one million. They are developing confidence in calculating simple percentages and fractions of a quantity and converting percentages and fractions into decimals. Across the school, children need to use their numeracy skills to solve a range of increasingly complex problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Children working within first level identify symmetry in patterns, pictures and two-dimensional shapes. They are developing confidence in creating symmetrical pictures and patterns with more than one line of symmetry. Most children working within second level describe, plot and record the location of a point using coordinate notation. As children move through the school, they need to deepen their understanding of more complex shape, position and movement concepts.

Information handling

- At early level, children use tally marks to record information correctly. They create simple pictorial displays to share information. At first level, children select and use the most appropriate way to gather and display data for given purpose, for example tally marks and bar graph. At second level, children display information accurately using a range of ways including line graphs and pie charts. Children analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a variety of data. Children need increased opportunities to apply their learning across the curriculum.

Ideas of chance and uncertainty

- At second level, children use the language of probability to describe the likelihood of simple events, for example certain, probably, unlikely.

Attainment over time

- The COVID-19 pandemic is impacting negatively on the attainment of a minority of children.
- Senior leaders gather attainment of a level information at the end of P1, P4 and P7. They were unable to provide data evidencing progress over time. Analysis during the inspection demonstrated children are making good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Senior leaders are acutely aware that they need to establish systems to gather robust information about children's progress over time. They need to plan regular analysis of children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels. This should ensure children make appropriate progress in their learning.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children's achievements both in and out with school are valued and celebrated at whole school assemblies and through digital platforms. These range from sporting successes to enjoyment of reading. Children are proud of their wide ranging achievements and talk confidently about how they feel the school celebrates their own successes, as well as those at a class and school level.
- Children are keen to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Most children engage in a range of opportunities to support their developing leadership skills. These include pupil council, reading leaders and buddies. As a result, children are growing in confidence and developing valuable skills in teamwork and leadership. Children feel they are listened to and their opinions valued.
- The school is at the early stages of tracking children's participation in clubs and committees within the school and local community. This is helping them to identify children who are missing out. Teachers plan to use this information to ensure these children take part in school-based activities.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. Senior leaders do not have a clear understanding of attainment gaps across the school. The headteacher makes use of PEF through enhanced staffing to support learning in literacy and numeracy for identified children. These interventions are beginning to improve children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders need to ensure that they monitor and gather robust evidence on interventions and the impact on outcomes for all children. They need to ensure that their approaches to improving equity result in reducing the poverty related attainment gap.

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.