

Summarised inspection findings

St Stephen's Primary School

West Dunbartonshire Council

17 March 2020

Key contextual information

St Stephen's Primary School is a denominational school located in Clydebank. It opened in 2001 and has a semi-open plan layout. It is set within a spacious outdoor area. An acting headteacher has been in post since May 2019, as the substantive headteacher is on maternity leave. The school has undergone a period of change in recent years resulting in a number of staff changes. The school's Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) indicates that the majority of children are in SIMD bands 1-3. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 231.

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

- St Stephen's Primary School has a welcoming, caring and inclusive ethos. The acting headteacher has established positive relationships with the whole school community and is well respected by children, staff, parents and partners. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher, principal teacher and acting principal teacher to promote high standards across the school. The senior leadership team work well together to achieve the school's vision of 'working together to realise our physical, spiritual, academic and social potential'.
- The school's vision, values and aims were reviewed and revised last session in consultation with staff, children and parents. The wider school community should now also be consulted. The school's values reflect the Gospel values and are displayed throughout the school. Children demonstrate the school's values of love, care, respect, collaboration, responsibility, ambition, excellence and inclusion on a daily basis. As a result, they have positive relationships with adults and each other.
- Senior leaders and staff use self-evaluation procedures to enable them to make informed judgements about the standards and quality of provision and outcomes for learners. The school's approaches to professional learning enable staff to work collaboratively to develop school priorities. A three-year self-evaluation cycle is in place to ensure staff evaluate the life and work of the school. Senior leaders need to ensure that self-evaluation processes lead to sustained impact on improving learning and teaching. They should continue to provide staff with clear strategic leadership and direction.
- Staff understand well the school's local context and focus on closing the poverty-related attainment gap using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). They are continuing to develop their skills in analysing a range of data to identify any gaps in children's learning and attainment. Staff then identify any interventions required to address these gaps.
- The school improvement plan has an ambitious set of relevant priorities, which reflect the National Improvement Framework. These were established following consultation with staff, children and parents. As a result, there is a collective aim to progress these priorities. All teachers have the opportunity to either lead or participate in working parties. Partners and the

wider school community should also be consulted about the relevance of these priorities. Pupils, parents and partners should be given further opportunities to contribute to and identify improvement priorities. The use of How Good is OUR School? (2018) would provide a useful framework for children's involvement in this process.

- Teachers are reflective and enthusiastic practitioners and are actively involved in improvement priorities in order to improve outcomes for children. They feel confident to initiate change. Senior leaders should ensure that change continues to focus on and links to, agreed improvement priorities. They should reflect further on the school's strategic priorities and ensure the pace of change is appropriate to meet the needs of the school community.
- Staff collegiate activities link to the school improvement priorities. For example, teachers have introduced approaches to play-based learning at early and first level and reciprocal reading across the school. All staff benefit from annual professional review meetings with senior leaders. Staff are positive about the opportunities they have to identify professional learning needs and to access appropriate professional learning. This includes collaborative reading and professional dialogue. As a result, they are beginning to develop a shared understanding of practice and whole-school approaches to pedagogy. They should build on this to develop further consistent approaches. They should continue to engage in practitioner enquiry in order to ensure school improvement priorities are progressed effectively.
- The senior leadership team have devised a helpful quality assurance calendar to monitor the quality of children's experiences. This includes classroom observations and sampling of children's work. The senior leadership team provide staff with constructive feedback with focussed next steps. These quality assurance activities are not yet having sufficient impact on school improvement. Senior leaders and staff should use information from direct observations to develop a shared understanding of effective practice to improve learning outcomes for all children. Staff should participate in peer observations so that they have the opportunity to share effective practice across the school.
- The majority of children have opportunities to develop their leadership skills as members of the pupil council, committees and by leading games in the playground. All children should have opportunities to develop their leadership skills by joining committees in school. They would also benefit from the opportunity to lead these committees. Children recently completed surveys on homework and their involvement in an intergenerational project. Across the school, children would benefit from further opportunities to lead their own learning.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in all classes with a strong emphasis on Gospel values. These values underpin learning and teaching approaches well. Most children interact confidently with adults and their peers, demonstrating empathy and respect. They are proud to be part of the St Stephen's community. The majority of children contribute positively to the school community and this experience develops their citizenship skills. Children have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and represent their peers' views by being a member of the pupil council and other committees. At the upper stages, children have regular opportunities to develop their skills for learning, life and work through world of work activities. Children at all stages should now have the opportunity to develop these skills to ensure progression in learning as children move through the school.
- All staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. As a result, they have recently introduced a range of learning experiences, for example, Forest School and intergenerational work to meet children's needs. Outdoor learning and school trips also provide beneficial learning experiences. Children require more opportunities to apply their learning across different contexts to provide more challenge.
- Teachers use digital technology effectively to enrich learning. This motivates most children to learn independently. Children and staff use digital learning profiles well to reflect on their learning and to set targets for their next steps in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Sharing these profiles online promotes engagement at home and enriches learning. A few children would like more opportunity to shape the purpose and relevance of their learning. This should enable them to take responsibility for contributing, influencing and planning their own learning.
- The majority of children are engaged in their learning and are eager to learn. They work collaboratively in pairs and in groups and interact well with each other during activities. The majority of teachers intervene appropriately to respond to the needs of children. In the majority of classes, children are developing skills such as problem solving, logic and creative thinking. This is increasing their motivation to learn. Children at early level benefit from well-planned play-based approaches. These are improving their numeracy and literacy skills. Staff should continue with plans to develop this approach across the curriculum.
- Overall the quality of learning, teaching and assessment is satisfactory across the school. Senior leaders and staff should work together to ensure approaches are of a consistently high quality across the school. In most classes, teachers share the purpose of learning with children. Teachers should involve children in co-creating the steps that would help them to be successful in their learning. This will deepen children's understanding of the purpose of their learning and their next steps. The majority of teachers use questioning effectively to clarify children's understanding of learning. This is not yet of consistently high quality across the

school. Teachers should plan more opportunities for higher order questioning during the course of lessons. This will increase the level of challenge for higher attaining children and improve differentiation. In the majority of lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions, which are motivating children to engage more fully with their learning. Teachers and senior leaders should continue to work together to share and agree expectations to establish a quality learning, teaching and assessment framework.

- Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments, to support their judgements of children's progress and attainment. Planned assessments are not yet integral to the learning process. Staff at all stages, should use the National Benchmarks to support them in planning assessment activities. This will develop a shared understanding of assessment linked directly to planning. Peer and self-assessment activities support children to evaluate their own learning. Children receive written and verbal feedback on their progress. This has a positive impact when linked explicitly to planned learning. A whole school assessment framework should be introduced to provide clarity and support all staff to identify children's next steps in learning.
- Teachers participate in planned moderation activities within the school and across the local learning community. Professional dialogue related to these activities is supporting teachers to make more accurate and reliable judgements about children's next steps in learning. A next step is to improve teachers' understanding of moderation as an integral part of the planning process and in making professional judgements of children's attainment.
- Staff and the senior leadership team have recently reviewed and revised approaches to planning. All staff use Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes to plan learning. Collaborative planning meetings across levels are having a positive impact on teachers understanding of progress through and across Curriculum for Excellence levels. The majority of children are involved in planning for interdisciplinary learning and have an element of choice in aspects of their learning. As planned, staff and children should work together to plan learning across the curriculum. This should support children to be more independent and to lead learning whilst making meaningful links across the curriculum.
- The senior leadership team have tracking and monitoring meetings with staff three times a year. Teachers identify children with barriers to their learning and introduce early interventions to support them. Systems are in place to track and monitor children's progress across literacy and numeracy. This includes using data based on summative assessments and teachers' professional judgements. As a result, teachers' judgements are becoming increasingly reliable in these areas of learning. Senior leaders should continue with plans to develop tracking and monitoring systems across all curricular areas.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff, parents and children have recently revised the curriculum rationale. This rationale provides a framework for staff to implement courses and programmes, whilst taking account of the local context. As planned, staff should continue to use this framework to create a relevant and meaningful curriculum which will develop children's skills for learning, life and work.
- Interdisciplinary learning provides engaging opportunities and develops well children's citizenship skills. Sustainability themes provide motivating learning experiences and are a good basis for a skills progression. Teachers should continue as planned to develop curricular experiences with partners and children. This will provide further breadth, depth and choice in learning and opportunities for children to apply their skills and knowledge in unfamiliar contexts.
- The local authority has produced Curriculum for Excellence progressive pathways for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These enable children to build upon prior learning. Staff should continue with planned improvements to support children in their progression through these pathways using the National Benchmarks.
- Staff at all stages, in collaboration with partners, use well the local environment. This enhances learners' experiences and builds well their leadership skills and confidence. For example, P7 children work collaboratively to design outdoor learning orienteering opportunities for younger children. Commendably, St Stephen's Primary has achieved five Eco Schools Scotland green flags, demonstrating children's commitment to learning about their environment. Children in P7 are participating in the John Muir Award to develop their leadership skills. Intergenerational work for children at P2 and P3 provides them with an opportunity to contribute to the wider community. Staff work collaboratively with outdoor learning specialists to provide rich learning experiences for specific groups of children.
- Children at P4 to P7 participate in weekly world of work opportunities that develop their employability skills. Children record their progress using recently introduced 'skills passports'. This supports them in understanding their strengths and areas for development. Senior leaders and teachers should continue with plans to use the Career Education Standards (3-18) to develop children's skills for learning, life and work at all stages.
- Well planned transitions from nursery to P1, from stage-to-stage, and from P7 to S1 support children to prepare for their next stage in learning. Enhanced transition programmes are in place for children with barriers to their learning. As a result, children's need are met well at points of transition.
- All children experience the statutory two hours of physical education per week. The provision of religious observance is in line with national guidance.
- All learners have opportunities to participate in a variety of after-school sporting activities. Senior leaders should continue with plans to extend the variety of after-school clubs to meet the needs and interests of all children.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- In the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents report that their child likes being at St Stephen's Primary School. Most are satisfied with the school and say the school is well led and managed. Almost all parents report that their children feel safe and that staff treat children fairly and with respect.
- Senior leaders and staff keep parents up to date with the work of the school in a range of ways, including through social media, text messages and school newsletters. Most parents report that they receive helpful information about how their child is progressing at appropriate times. The majority of parents are positive about activities provided by the school where they can learn together with their child. Most agree that the school gives advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- All staff recognise and value the variety of ways in which parents contribute to a child's learning in school. Almost all parents report they are comfortable approaching senior leaders and staff with questions, suggestions or problems. They feel their views are taken into account when making changes.
- The Parent Council is supportive of the school. Most parents consider that they are kept up to date about the work of the Parent Council and are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school.

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

- Throughout the school, there is a strong sense of community. The school values underpin positive relationships across the school and contribute effectively to the Catholic ethos. Most children enjoy learning and feel that peers and staff listen to their views. Most report that they feel safe, and have someone to speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Across the school, children are well mannered and considerate of each other.
- Staff have a shared understanding of the wellbeing indicators and they take appropriate account of them when planning learning. Most children have a growing awareness of the language of wellbeing and are beginning to use the indicators to reflect on their own wellbeing. Senior leaders have identified correctly the need to review the effectiveness of this approach in order to develop a fuller and more regular profile of children's progress.
- The school's approach to rights-based education is helping children to develop a good understanding of respect for others and the environment. Children's participation in roles such as pupil council members and digital leaders helps them to apply their learning within and beyond school. Senior leaders and staff need to incorporate children's rights into the health and wellbeing programme, and the forthcoming review of the school's positive relationships policy. A next step is for children to make better connections between their learning in health and wellbeing and other aspects of their lives.
- A variety of sports-based clubs and activities provide opportunities for children to build friendships and social networks as they develop shared interests in sport. Participation levels across the school are good and the school recognises the contribution these experiences make to children's health and wellbeing. Senior leaders and staff record children's participation in these activities. Senior leaders and staff recognise the need to offer a greater range of clubs and activities to meet children's wider interests.
- The school has established productive working relationships with a range of partner agencies and organisations. This informs and supports the work of the school, and helps children to learn about how to take more responsibility for their own decisions and health and wellbeing. Partners comment positively on the relationships they have with members of the school, which is contributing to positive outcomes for children and families.
- Children across the school enjoy opportunities to learn outdoors. This is an increasingly prominent feature of children's learning experiences. In moving forward, staff recognise the need to develop a progressive programme for outdoor learning to support and enhance the delivery of health and wellbeing across the school.
- The headteacher works closely with the senior leadership team, teaching staff and support staff to ensure that they are proactive in fulfilling their legislative duties. They demonstrate

appropriate knowledge and understanding of current legislation, guidance and codes of practice relating to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Staff engage in professional training which helps them improve the way they support and care for children.

- The school has developed well a staged intervention approach to identify any additional support needs of children. Senior leaders and staff work well with parents and partners to support how they plan to meet these needs. Learning assistants provide a caring and supportive environment, ensuring that children make appropriate progress in their learning. As planned, senior leaders should further develop approaches to nurture throughout the school.
- Senior leaders maintain accurate additional support for learning records. Systems are in place to identify and record personalised targets for children requiring additional support. Senior leaders, with staff, should review these targets to ensure that they are consistently specific and measurable, and support individual children to develop their skills.
- Staff work to include all children in the life of the school, whatever their needs or background. They support children who face challenges in their learning, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions used to overcome barriers to learning.
- The headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality regularly and liaises with Family Support Workers to deal effectively with any monitoring issues that may arise. Attendance is above the national average and exclusions are below the national average.
- Senior leaders and staff plan religious and moral education (RME) in accordance with 'This Is Our Faith'. There are strong and supportive links with the diocese, which supports learning in RME and religious observance. Staff support children well in sacramental preparation. Teachers address regularly issues relating to equality and diversity through the school's programmes for RME and health and wellbeing.

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

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Across the school, most children achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading, listening and talking and numeracy. The majority achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in writing. Most children with additional barriers to their learning, are attaining appropriate to their individual level of need.

Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- Overall, children's progress in listening and talking is good. At early level, children enjoy listening to and talking about their favourite stories. Most children listen and respond appropriately to their teachers and to each other during class and group discussions. At first level, most children listen to and share ideas with each other in a respectful way. They communicate their thoughts clearly and audibly. At second level, most children plan and deliver organised presentations. They demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal techniques while interacting confidently with each other. Across the school, children should be challenged more through planned opportunities to apply their skills in wider contexts. They should be supported to develop their skills in a more progressive way.

Reading

- Across the school, children's progress in reading is good. At the early level, children use a variety of strategies and are making good progress to decode words. This is helping most children to make good progress in reading familiar texts aloud. At first level, children confidently explain their preferences for particular authors whilst referring to genre. Most children read confidently with understanding and expression. At second level, children give supporting reasons for their choice of book. They talk confidently about the author's craft in relation to setting, character development and audience engagement. They are less confident in describing how to locate information in a non-fiction text using contents and index. Across the school, children need to develop further their independent reading skills with appropriate support and challenge. Children have access to fiction and non-fiction texts in classes to promote a culture of reading for enjoyment. They are able to borrow books to take home to read for pleasure. Staff should ensure that pupils choose books of an appropriate level, when they read for enjoyment.

Writing

- Across the school, most children are making good progress in writing. At early level, most children blend familiar sounds to write simple words. The majority have made a positive start in attempting to write simple sentences. By the end of first level, most children punctuate sentences correctly and use descriptive language and connectives effectively. Most plan and

organise information using an appropriate format for the intended audience. At second level, the majority of children use a range of punctuation accurately. Most use paragraphs to separate thoughts and ideas and structure their writing appropriately for a given purpose. Children are not yet regularly creating extended imaginative pieces. Across the school, children should be encouraged to take more pride in their presentation of writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy is good. Teachers have undertaken professional learning to teach numeracy and mathematics using a mastery approach. At early level, teachers provide children with motivating play-based experiences to extend and deepen their learning. This is helping to improve children's attitudes towards learning numeracy and to raise attainment.

Number, money and measurement

- At early level, most children work independently with concrete materials to identify and use numbers within 20. A few children work with numbers beyond 20. The majority of children count on and back to add and subtract within ten. At first level, the majority of children describe a range of strategies to support mental calculations. Children are less confident using written calculations to solve problems. At first level, most children are confident in telling the time using digital and analogue clocks and convert time accurately to the 24-hour clock. At second level, almost all children have a good understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children identify and name two-dimensional shapes in the local environment. This activity supports their understanding of applying mathematical skills in real-life contexts. Across the school, children should have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills in a range of contexts. At first level, most children identify a right angle and identify more than one line of symmetry in patterns. At second level, orienteering activities are supporting most children to use their knowledge of coordinates to plot and record the location of a point.

Information handling

- At first level, children gather information using a survey and then create simple bar graphs. At second level, children accurately classify information using Venn diagrams. They conduct simple experiments to describe accurately the probability of events.

Attainment over time

- Data provided by the school, shows fluctuating levels of attainment over time across all Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is in part due to teachers' developing skills in recent years in assessing children's progress. The increased reliability of teachers' professional judgements indicates that current attainment data is becoming more accurate and reliable.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children are proud of the part they play in helping the school gain nationally recognised awards. These include the gold sportscotland School Sport Award and five Eco Schools Scotland green flags. Staff recognise children's individual achievements in and out of school at school assemblies, on wall displays and on social media.
- Children in P6 and P7 work towards achieving the Pope Francis Faith Award. They learn that their faith contributes to the care and welfare of others. Children are passionate about their achievements in helping to address equity through their involvement in the 'Minnie Vinnies' parish group. P2 children are gaining valuable citizenship skills by taking part in the 'Dementia Friends' programme.
- Children have the opportunity to become involved in a range of leadership roles and committees. As a result, children's self-esteem, confidence and citizenship skills are improving. Over time, all children should have the opportunity to take responsibility and to experience leadership roles. Children need to develop a greater awareness of the skills and capacities they are acquiring through their involvement in wider achievement opportunities. Senior leaders should devise a system to track and monitor the development of these skills.

Equity for all learners

- Additional staffing provided by PEF is successfully supporting a number of initiatives to improve the attainment of children at risk of missing out. These include enhanced P7-S1 transition, outdoor learning, play-based learning, phonics and early numeracy. As a result, data from assessments and action research demonstrate improved progress in key aspects of literacy and numeracy for targeted children.
- Senior leaders and staff have a good knowledge of children and families, and use this well to remove barriers to participation and ensure equity. They ensure that they take account of the needs of all children and their families when planning events, excursions and residential experiences. They should continue to monitor the impact of a range of initiatives to ensure equity in raising attainment over time for all children.

School Empowerment

■ Empowering the school community.

- The acting headteacher recognises that empowering staff and children is key to continuous improvement. As a result, senior leaders are implementing a range of strategies and approaches to develop further an empowered school community.
- School staff are developing a supportive and empowering culture at St Stephen's Primary by building trust and working collaboratively. Senior leaders support teaching staff well.
- Senior leaders encourage parental involvement in school life. The acting headteacher consulted with parents and involved them in a working group to develop a new approach to homework.
- A number of children are growing in confidence and participate in decisions about the school community. They achieve this through involvement in the pupil council and leadership committees. A few involved feel that they are able to make a difference to school life.

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.