

Summarised inspection findings

Pitcairn Primary School

Perth and Kinross Council

16 September 2025

Key contextual information

Pitcairn Primary School is a rural non-denominational school in the village of Almondbank in Perth and Kinross. It serves the community of Almondbank and the surrounding area, including Bertha Park. The primary school roll currently comprises 115 children organised across six classes. The headteacher has been in post for three years. The headteacher is supported in her role by a principal teacher.

Almost all children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 7 and 8. Across the school, 43% of children have an identified additional support need at the time of the inspection.

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

- Across the school, relationships between staff and children are positive. School values and the 'Pitcairn Promise' are displayed in corridors and used effectively in assemblies to promote positive relationships and behaviour. All staff should now ensure they reference the values in their daily interactions with children in their class. Staff and children learn about children's rights and making links to the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child.
- Almost all children demonstrate a responsible attitude to their learning and participate well in active approaches to learning. In almost all lessons, children have opportunities to work independently and co-operatively in pairs and small groups. Teachers enable children to lead their own learning confidently. A few children would benefit from increased challenge in their learning. Occasionally, children experience interrupted learning during lessons. This includes when a few children exhibit distressed behaviours and disengage from their learning. Skilled support staff manage low levels of dysregulated behaviour well. Senior leaders and staff should continue to build on the progress made with planning for enhanced support and managing dysregulated behaviour.
- Senior leaders and teachers have created a 'Learner Experience Toolkit' to establish a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. This work is at the early stages of implementation and has been the focus of teachers' recent professional learning. Senior leaders are working with staff to implement a consistent approach across all stages and build on good practice within the school. This is beginning to support staff to ensure that all children experience high-quality and appropriately challenging learning experiences.
- Most teachers provide clear instructions and explanations during learning activities. Teachers are developing their approaches to sharing the purpose of learning with the children. For example, they discuss the purpose of learning with children and display it clearly throughout lessons. Teachers should now ensure that learning is progressive and focused on the

development and consolidation of children's skills and knowledge linked to Curriculum for Excellence standards.

- In almost all lessons, teachers break down the steps that children need to follow to achieve success in learning. Teachers should ensure that these steps are clearly linked to what children are learning as opposed to task completion. This will support children to evaluate their own progress and help them to make informed decisions about their next steps in learning. Across all stages, teachers should use a consistent approach to setting targets and giving feedback to support progress in writing and listening and talking skills.
- Staff in the early years have carefully organised their learning spaces to create literacy rich environments. The attractive spaces both indoors and outside provide a variety of different play areas. These allow children to develop skills in literacy and numeracy and explore, create and follow their own interests. Teachers engage in relevant professional learning to develop their understanding of play pedagogy. They offer children new opportunities daily. Children make suggestions about how to use their space and teachers respond appropriately. As an example, teachers created a supermarket in the classroom in response to children's requests. Staff observations are used to plan next steps and further identify how children are progressing and building skills in their play. Staff should continue to support children to practice skills in different contexts. A play policy statement would be helpful in communicating the school approach to children's play.
- In the majority of lessons, children have the opportunity to use digital technology to support their learning. The pupil leadership group support children to develop their digital skills and to use different technologies. This is increasing their motivation and enjoyment in learning. Teachers should now consider how to further develop the use of digital technology across the whole school.
- Teachers use with growing confidence a range of standardised and summative assessments for literacy and numeracy. This is supporting teachers to make reliable judgements, increasingly based on a sound evidence base. Senior leaders recognise the need to work with teachers to develop a consistent approach to assessing children's progress across all aspects of their learning. This should support teachers to assess children's progress in planned learning and provide children with opportunities to demonstrate how they apply their learning in different contexts. Teachers should also consider the role of children in assessing their own progress in learning and provide more opportunities for children to self- and peer-assess.
- Teachers work closely together and learn with and from each other. This is building their confidence in their professional judgements of children's progress and attainment. There are currently few opportunities for planned moderation. Senior leaders plan to increase these opportunities for staff to work with each other, and other schools. This will support a stronger understanding of children's progress within and across the school.
- Staff are at the early stages of using a more consistent and streamlined approach to planning. Teachers use progression pathways for literacy and numeracy well to inform their planning. Teachers' use of progression pathways to plan learning experiences for children across other curricular areas is variable. Staff should continue to review their approaches to short- and medium-term planning to ensure there are clear expectations for progress in learning in each class and for each subject. In doing this, staff should provide increased opportunities for children to maximise their progress and to be involved in planning their learning.
- Senior leaders meet with teachers four times a year to review planning and assessment and to discuss children's progress in learning. They use the school tracking system to record

children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Together, they identify interventions and support strategies for children requiring additional support. Senior leaders and teachers should now ensure that planning and assessment is more robust. This should support them to track more effectively children's progress in learning. This in turn, should support teachers to plan for progression more effectively.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

- Almost all children in P1, P4 and P7 achieve national expectations in Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in listening and talking. A majority of children at P1 achieve expected CfE levels in reading and writing. Most children in P4 and P7 achieve expected levels in reading and writing. Most children at P1 and P7 achieve expected CfE levels in numeracy. Almost all children in P4 achieve expected levels in numeracy. School data is increasingly robust in literacy and numeracy. Most children who require additional support make appropriate progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children take turns when listening and talking during play and teacher-led activities. Children talk about stories and answer questions about them. At first level, almost all children engage well with others and respond appropriately. Children contribute well to group discussions and share their opinions respectfully. They talk enthusiastically about the information they share with others using digital presentations. Almost all children at second level are developing debating and persuasion skills and show respect for the point of view of others. They benefit from frequent opportunities to build their confidence and skills in presenting ideas and information for a wide range of purposes and audiences.

Reading

- Children at early level learn in a literacy rich environment. They use stories and rhymes well to develop their awareness of patterns in language. Children explore sounds and letters through play and during focused teaching and have a secure understanding of these. Children at first level have preferred types of books they like to read. They explain their preference for a particular genre and give reasons for their choice. They read with increasing fluency and are developing skills to improve expression. Children should read aloud more regularly to others for a range of purposes to further build their skills. Almost all children at second level discuss confidently the variety of genres and authors they like and the reasons why. They would benefit from increased opportunities for choice with class novels. A whole-school approach to ensure all children read regularly would support the development of key reading skills.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children write sentences using capital letters and full stops accurately. Children have a wide range of play contexts which encourage and motivate them to use their emergent writing skills. Play experiences allow them to develop fine motor skills to develop handwriting successfully. Most children at first level write for a range of purposes.

Writing tasks are often related to their learning across the curriculum. Children make notes to help them plan their writing and to create texts. Almost all children at second level write successfully for a wide range of purposes and audiences. They are motivated when given choice in writing and enjoy creating personal fact files. They write regularly and at an appropriate length. Children should be encouraged to achieve consistently high standards of presentation.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children's standards of presentation and notation in numeracy and mathematics are variable. At all stages, teachers should have consistently high expectations of how children should present their work.

Number, money and measure

- Most children at early level add and subtract numbers within 10 confidently. They are developing their skills in solving simple missing number problems. Children are developing their awareness of how money is used, recognising and using a range of coins. They enjoy using coins to pay for items through play. Almost all children at first level accurately round numbers to 100. They use strategies to determine division and multiplication facts. They tell the time using analogue and digital clocks and confidently use 24-hour notation. Most children at second level can round whole numbers to the nearest 1000 and decimal fractions to one decimal place. They calculate simple fractions and percentages to solve problems. At first and second levels, children would benefit from more opportunities to solve multi-step word problems.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level recognise and sort a range of two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They use three-dimensional (3D) shapes creatively in their play to make models and structures. They can make simple patterns and use the language of position. Almost all children at first level name and classify a range of 3D objects correctly. They are confident in identifying lines of symmetry in pictures and 2D shapes. They demonstrate accurate knowledge of grid references. Most children at second level classify and draw a range of angles including acute, obtuse and reflex. They measure the dimensions of a circle accurately. They should continue to develop their skills in using complementary and supplementary angles to calculate missing angles.

Information handling

- Almost all children at early level record simple data sets using bar graphs, pictograms and Venn diagrams. They are developing skills well in gathering data as part of outdoor learning across the curriculum. Almost all children at first level understand and interpret accurately simple bar graphs and charts and extract key information successfully. They should now have opportunities to gather, sort and display data using a variety of methods. At second level, most children analyse and draw conclusions from a variety of sources, including pie charts. Children at first and second levels should continue to develop further their information handling skills through using digital technology to support their learning.

Attainment over time

- Attendance has improved this session from 93% in 2023/24 to 95% in 2024/25. This is above local authority and national average attendance figures. The headteacher monitors attendance closely and follows local authority processes for a few children whose attendance is less than 90%. Senior leaders implement targeted approaches to support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and contact partner agencies as deemed necessary. There are no children on part-time timetables.

- Staff track children's levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. They have an increased focus developing consistent and coherent approaches to support robust professional judgements. Teachers have an accurate picture of attainment for literacy and numeracy. Staff have begun to track the coverage of learning across all curriculum areas and are at the early stages of gathering an overview. This should help them to analyse more accurately the progress children are making as they move from stage to stage.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All pupils develop leadership and communication skills well by taking part in leadership and house groups, Children in P7 develop valuable citizenship skills through the Citizenship award. Staff also work closely with local authority and community partners. As a result, children across the school engage in a broad variety of activities, such as cricket, rugby, bikeability, county sports and 'salmon in the classroom'. Children develop well their sporting and communication skills through these activities.
- Staff encourage parents to share children's achievements, and these are highlighted at weekly assemblies and in the 'Good News' newsletter. Children and staff also recognise and celebrate children's achievements through house points, 'Pitcairn Proud' postcards and the local village newsletter. In addition to recognising the achievements of individual children, these approaches celebrate children's demonstration of school values.
- Staff run a wide range of activities such as construction, dance, singing, gardening and Minecraft at lunchtime and afterschool in response to children's interests. Children enjoy sharing and learning skills with and from each other. Senior leaders track attendance at these clubs. Not all children have access to afterschool clubs, due in part to the availability of transport. Senior leaders are at the early stages of developing a system for monitoring and tracking opportunities for wider achievement in and out of school. Staff are not yet tracking the skills children are developing as a result of these activities.

Equity for all learners

- The Parent Council subsidises payment of class trips. Senior leaders provide transport to and from activities to avoid excessive costs for families and ensure that no child misses out on an opportunity. Pre-loved uniform is made available to all families at parents' nights.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to pay for additional support staff to provide wellbeing, literacy and numeracy interventions for a few identified children. They have rightly identified the need to review this to ensure they measure more clearly the impact of PEF. As part of this work, they should consult with parents about how PEF is used.

Other relevant evidence

- Across the school, children have access to a library area to promote reading for enjoyment. The local library bus visits regularly to encourage children to access a range of texts.
- All children experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- All children learn French progressively as part of the curriculum. As part of the entitlement to 1+ 2 languages, children in P5 to P7 learn Spanish as L3 for a set period of time during the year.

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.