

Summarised inspection findings

Dunbarney Primary School

Perth and Kinross Council

28 April 2026

Key contextual information

Dunbarney Primary School is a semi-rural non-denominational primary school serving the Bridge of Earn area of Perth. The school also has a nursery class. Across the school, a few children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 1 and 2. Just under half of children reside in decile 5 with the remainder residing in deciles 8 and 9. The current roll is 202 children across nine classes, four of which are composite. Senior leaders report that 24% of children require additional support with their learning. A few children have English as an additional language.

The leadership team comprises the headteacher and depute headteacher. The headteacher has been in post since 2023 and the depute headteacher has been in post for 13 years.

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	

- Across the school, staff consistently foster positive, nurturing relationships that support children's engagement and wellbeing very well. Children are polite, motivated, and demonstrate a strong readiness to learn. Staff and children work together effectively to create a calm, respectful and rights-based ethos rooted in the shared values of honesty, ambition, respect and kindness. Almost all children understand these values well and model them in their interactions with staff and each other.
- Staff have engaged positively in professional learning which is developing very well their understanding of nurturing principles. As a result, staff have reviewed classroom and shared learning environments to ensure they are inclusive and supportive of emotional regulation. Staff are increasingly confident in meeting the needs of all learners which is supporting children to feel better understood as a holistic learner. Children show consistently positive behaviour, listen attentively, and interact with kindness, contributing productivity in group and collaborative tasks. When children require help to regulate their emotions, adults intervene sensitively using effective, individualised approaches that enable children to re-engage in learning quickly. Children experiencing barriers to learning are well supported and demonstrate confidence in seeking help. This strong culture of support encourages children to take responsibility for helping each other, contributing to an inclusive and cooperative learning environment across the school.

- Learning and teaching across the school is underpinned by shared values and high expectations. Children work effectively both independently and collaboratively and are increasingly eager and capable to take a more active role in their learning. This has resulted in consistently calm, purposeful spaces that promote focused learning. Most children contribute effectively to planning learning that links across different curricular areas through the big and little question approach. Where teachers provide meaningful opportunities for personalisation and choice, children show stronger motivation and achieve greater depth in their learning. In the most effective practice, these opportunities create relevant, engaging contexts that enhance participation and enthusiasm. To build on this good practice, senior leaders and staff should improve the consistency and range of meaningful opportunities for children to influence their learning.
- Staff at the early stages have introduced an appropriate play based approach to learning where children have daily opportunities to engage in both structured and open ended play experiences. Across the middle and upper stages a few classes experience a small range of high-quality opportunities for play, creative exploration and outdoor learning. Where learning is enriched through outdoor experiences and well-planned play, children show sustained engagement, and deeper learning. As planned senior leaders and staff should continue to develop play based and creative approaches to learning and teaching at the early stages and across the school taking account of national guidance to ensure that all children experience play based approaches in a progressive manner.
- Across the school children access a small range of digital technologies which they use well to research and collaborate with each other linked to topic-based learning. In a few classes children have opportunities to explore programmable toys and use cameras. Teachers now need to improve the quality and consistency of these opportunities to support all children to become more independent in their digital learning. Developing these approaches will help to ensure all children develop progressive digital skills as they move through the school. Children in the upper stages who require additional support are making positive progress in using digital supports, such as text-to-speech and reader software. These help effectively to reduce barriers to learning, enhance independence, and enable access to meaningful and engaging learning experiences to meet children's individual needs.
- Teachers are developing well their use of a four-part lesson model in all classes to develop a more consistent approach to learning and teaching. In most lessons teachers plan learning and subsequent learning activities set at the correct level of difficulty for most children. A few children across the school would benefit from increased levels of challenge to accelerate further their progress in learning. In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions are clear and children understand the purpose of their learning. Teachers share well the intended learning and steps to success in almost all lessons. They should now build on this to support children to co-create the criteria for success. This will further develop children's understanding of how they can be successful and support their self-assessment of progress. Teachers use questioning effectively in most lessons to check children's understanding. They should further develop their questioning skills to extend children's thinking and encourage curiosity. As planned, Senior leaders and staff should further develop the draft learning and teaching policy to support the consistency of high quality learning and teaching across the school and build on existing good practice that exists.

- All teachers provide positive and constructive verbal feedback to children in relation to their learning. Helpful written feedback is evident in all classes. In a few examples, written feedback in writing is highly effective in supporting children to understand what they need to do next to improve their work. Senior leaders should continue to work with staff to create a common approach to written feedback, self- and peer-assessment that is progressive across all stages and curricular areas.
- Staff provide children with a range of relevant leadership roles such as house captains, digital leaders, global goals group and play buddies. They provide older children with opportunities to plan, organise and lead a variety of activities for younger children through lunchtime clubs. Children plan each activity thoroughly and identifying the skills being developed. This enables older children to develop well their leadership skills and use them effectively in real-life situations.
- Staff make effective use of community partners to support learning outwith the classroom. Children have opportunities to experience sports including rugby, cricket and lacrosse. A few children have taken part in the local authority 'Gymfest' event, developing skills and confidence in gymnastics and performance. Children develop well their citizenship skills through working with the local care home. They also take part in a range of projects developing their artistic and musical skills.
- A few teachers are involved in a national writing approach to develop the teaching of writing across the middle stages of the school. This is resulting in a more consistent and shared understanding in the teaching of writing across the level. Senior leaders have identified correctly that a more consistent approach to writing across the school is improving the quality of teaching and is leading to improvements in children's progress and overall attainment in writing.
- Senior leaders have developed a helpful assessment calendar which provides an overview of the balance and focus of assessments across the school. Teachers use a variety of summative and formative assessments well to gather baseline data to demonstrate children's progress. Teachers use assessment information well to support their judgements on children's attainment.
- All teachers plan learning well using Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. They use local authority progressive skills frameworks effectively across all curricular areas. Teachers work across levels effectively to plan blocks of learning. This helps to support consistency across stages. Teachers now need to use assessment information more clearly to inform their planning. This should help them to better meet the varied needs of all children.
- Teaching staff undertake useful moderation activities in literacy and numeracy across stages to support their understanding of national standards. As identified, the headteacher should plan further opportunities for staff to further moderate with colleagues from local schools. This has the potential to further support staff's shared understanding of standards and

increase teachers' confidence and accuracy of their professional judgements across the curriculum.

- Staff work together well to understand the needs of children who require additional support with their learning. Senior leaders, teachers and support staff have effective and systematic approaches to plan and review regularly the impact of targeted interventions and the personalised support children need to succeed. As a result, staff are meeting the needs of children who require additional support well.
- Senior leaders and staff regularly track and monitor the progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers participate in regular, focused meetings with senior leaders with a clear focus on the progress children are making in their learning, including those who face barriers to their learning. Staff's robust tracking and monitoring of children's progress is effectivity leading to raised attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. Teachers should now apply their strong approach to using assessment information in literacy and numeracy to other areas of the curriculum. This should support them to plan learning across the curriculum that better matches children's needs and stage of learning.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- At P1, almost all children achieve national expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking, reading and numeracy. A few exceed these. Most children at P1 attain nationally expected levels of attainment in writing. At P4, almost all children achieve national expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking and reading, most children at P4 attain nationally expected levels of attainment in writing and Numeracy. At P7, All children achieve national expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking, writing and numeracy and, most children at P7 attain nationally expected levels of attainment in reading.
- Almost all children who have additional support needs achieve very well in their individual targets. Children benefit from universal, targeted, and specialist interventions. These interventions lead to children making very good and accelerated progress with most now attaining in line with national standards and expectations.

Attainment in literacy and English

- In literacy and English, almost all children make very good progress in listening, talking and reading. Most children make very good progress in writing. Children make strong progress as they progress through the school and as a result, almost all children achieve writing at second level before leaving P7.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen very well and are articulate when talking. At early level, almost all children focus and listen very well to information and instructions from others. They enjoy sharing facts and engaging in discussions with adults and peers. At first level, almost all children listen carefully and respond appropriately to questions from teachers. Children are very articulate and share important facts, including favourite subjects. At the upper stages, almost all children are attentive and speak confidently on various topics, including when presenting to others. They reflect carefully before responding to questions and suggestions from others.

Reading

- Across the school almost all children are very fluent readers as appropriate to their age and stage of development. At the early level, younger children enjoy stories. Almost all children's reading skills are developing very well. They use their knowledge of different sounds, and at times illustrations in books, to understand texts. At first and second levels, almost all children use expression, punctuation and pace very effectively to engage listeners. They can discuss the key features of different genres and various characteristics of fiction and non-fiction texts. By P7, almost all children are very enthusiastic, articulate and confident readers, including when being in front of larger groups.

Writing

- At early level, most children are developing key writing skills successfully, including using simple punctuation. At first level, most children write well and at length for different purposes. They are improving how they use grammar and punctuation to enhance their work. They use paragraphs well to organise work, particularly when writing at length. Children need to continue to improve the presentation of their written work. At second level, almost all children are enthusiastic and very competent writers who use their skills for various purposes. Across the school, a few children are working at improving spelling and handwriting.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics at early and second level. Most children make good progress at first level. Children make very strong progress as they move beyond first level to ensure almost all achieve second level before leaving P7.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children recognise and recall numbers correctly in a forwards and backwards sequence to 20. They add numbers with accuracy within 10. At first level, most children round numbers with confidence to the nearest 10 and 100. They use number operations correctly and apply known strategies appropriately to solve multiplication word problems. Not all children are confident to apply their knowledge of fractions in real-life contexts. At second level, almost all children have a well-developed understanding of number. They apply an effective range of strategies to solve multi-step mathematical problems. They use and convert units of measurement very well to carry out calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children copy, continue and create simple patterns involving shapes with accuracy. They use positional language correctly, including forwards, backwards, in front and behind. At first level, most children identify confidently a range of two-dimensional shapes. They are increasing their understanding of compass points. At second level, almost all children identify, classify and describe a range of simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects very well using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.

Information handling

- Almost all children at early level are developing well their knowledge of colour, shape and size to match and sort items in a variety of different ways. At first level, most children understand

simple bar graphs and charts. They use these successfully to interpret information. Almost all children at second level collect, organise and interpret information accurately in a range of appropriate graphs and charts. Children collect, display and discuss data with confidence in real-life contexts, for example, as part of their global goals leadership group. Across the stages, children would benefit from more practical opportunities to use information in real-life contexts to support them to better understand the relevance of information handling in their lives.

Attainment over time

Attendance

- Children's attendance is above both the local authority and national averages. A few children are improving their attendance through bespoke packages, including with partners, to help address attendance issues. School staff recognise the need to continue improving attendance for specific groups and cohorts of children. A few children attend school on a flexible or part time timetable that have been agreed at local authority level. Senior leaders monitor closely the attendance and progress of these children well. They work very effectively with health agencies and partners to address barriers to attendance and can evidence how measures have closed the attendance gap for children. Senior leaders should continue to work with partners to raise attendance further to ensure all children receive their entitlement to a Broad General Education as best they can.
- Overall, children's attainment, particularly in literacy, has been of a consistently high standard over the last three years. The school's data reflects consistently high CfE levels of attainment for literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders correctly identified a dip in P4 attainment in writing. Along with staff they targeted improvement in the quality of teaching in writing and strengthen the quality of targeted interventions at the middle stages of the school. The school's data accurately reflects very well upward gains across the level where identified gaps were addressed over time. This enabled almost all children to attain second levels in writing by the end of P7. Children's attainment in listening and talking and reading is consistently strong. Their attainment in writing and numeracy has risen steadily over the past three years.
- Almost all children, who have additional support needs, demonstrate very good attainment. They make consistent gains as they achieve personal targets over time.
- Staff's moderation and tracking arrangements contribute very well to maintaining these standards. They have improved their professional judgments on achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and staff are well placed to develop further tracking across all areas of the curriculum so that staff have a clear overview of children's progress against national standards in all other curricular areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children value their individual and whole school achievements. Their successes are celebrated appropriately, including those from outwith school. Staff and children are proud of various awards and accredited national recognition, including having status as a nurturing and problem-solving school. Children speak enthusiastically of how they achieved national accreditation for their work on rights and can articulate well how these experiences have

helped them to develop important skills such as being effective contributors in school and developing their citizenship skills.

- Across the school, increasing numbers of children gain key life skills in leadership, teamwork, resilience, perseverance and citizenship through taking on various responsibilities, including within the local community. This includes as leaders, house captains and vice captains. A few children achieve important skills through engaging very well in activities related to global goals, climate change and pollution. Children, particularly at the upper stages, are developing sound knowledge of how different skills gained link to learning, life and the world of work. Senior leaders should continue to expand existing systems and profiling tools to include a clearer overview of skills all children achieve. This should support them to target those at risk of missing out and ensure equity and equality in personal achievement as children move through the school.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a very good understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. They work very well with different partners to help support children and families facing challenges. Through these partnerships, families and children benefit from a range of support for personal development and achievement.
- Senior leaders use the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) very well to help individual children attain and improve their wellbeing and overall outcomes. Together with staff, senior leaders use attainment information very effectively to deliver successful interventions. Children benefit from universal, targeted, proportionate and specialist interventions in literacy and numeracy. Children speak positively about how this helps them to attain and achieve. As a result, identified children make very good and accelerated progress with most now attaining in line with national standards and expectations.

Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with education and the catering service
- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Staff also provide opportunities for physical activity through an extensive range of clubs and partnership work.
- All children receive their entitlement to learn a modern language through the 1 + 2 approach to language learning. All children learn French progressively from P1 to P7. In addition, children in P5 to P7 learn British Sign Language.
- Senior leaders share with parents and carers how they plan to use PEF. Senior leaders should continue to consult with parents, carers and children on the use of PEF across the school.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.