

Summarised inspection findings

Kettle Primary School

Fife Council

16 June 2026

Key contextual information

Kettle Primary School is situated in Cupar, Fife Council. The current acting headteacher had been in post for three weeks at the time of inspection and leads a team of three class teachers. There has been significant change to the entire staff team over the last year. The previous acting headteacher was in post between January and December 2025. The last permanent Headteacher was in post in December 2024.

Across the school there are 58 children, organised across three multi-stage classes. In September 2025, the school reported that 14% of children required additional support with their learning. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 6, with a few children living in deciles 5, 7 and 8.

Kettle Nursery Class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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	

- Instability of leadership and staff changes over the past year has had a significant impact on the leadership and pace of change.
- The previous acting headteacher correctly prioritised the need to review the school’s vision, values and aims. They engaged children, parents and staff in their review. This enabled the whole school community to develop greater ownership of this work. Staff promote and discuss the values of being ‘kind, respectful, responsible and ambitious’ with children in class. Children demonstrating the values in their daily interactions are rewarded with certificates at weekly assemblies. Children are becoming increasingly able to link the school’s values to their behaviour, both in the classroom and in the playground.
- The previous acting headteacher focused on building positive relationships and promoting positive behaviours across the school. The current acting headteacher has continued to focus on building positive relationships and promoting positive behaviours across the school. She has reviewed the positive relationships policy following consultation with children, staff and parents. Staff have begun to implement this refreshed policy. As a result of this development work, children’s behaviour across the school is improving. This is improving their readiness to learn.

- Teachers are at the early stages of understanding their role in evaluating the work of the school. This session, staff have begun to evaluate a range of evidence against the current school improvement plan (SIP) priorities. This is beginning to support staff to identify key areas for improvement more effectively. As a priority, the staff team need to create an action plan to improve the quality of learning and teaching across the school. The acting headteacher should strengthen approaches to monitoring and evaluating the impact of school improvement priorities. This has the potential to better inform staff's identification and prioritisation of future improvement work, and to support better outcomes for all children.
- Almost all children are consulted on school improvement priorities during assemblies. Children have started to use How good is OUR school? to identify what is going well in school and what needs to improve. This supports children to share their views in a regular, structured way. Children and parents now need to be more regularly involved in the identification of future school priorities. There is a need to further strengthen relationships and begin to involve the whole school community in the collective drive for improvement.
- Teachers engage in professional learning to improve outcomes for children. They participated recently in annual professional review and development (PRD) discussions. Teachers are at the early stages of linking their PRD discussions to their role in school improvement. They work together collaboratively on professional learning. Their recent focus on improving the quality of written feedback is leading to a more consistent approach across the school. Children are beginning to speak more confidently about what this feedback means to them in their learning. The acting headteacher should now look to empower staff to contribute more effectively to improvement and change. A next step is to develop staff's leadership capacity through relevant leadership roles and opportunities across the school.
- The acting headteacher has developed a robust quality assurance calendar. It identifies a range of appropriate activities to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve outcomes for children. This includes class observations and learning walks. This calendar has only recently been introduced and shared with staff. The acting headteacher should now prioritise the consistent implementation of this policy to ensure all staff have a clearer understanding of what needs to improve across the school. She should increase the range of quality assurance activities to include more regular monitoring of children's work.
- All children are part of a leadership group within the school which supports them to lead change. All children have a role within these leadership groups. They talk positively about these groups which include gardening, Rights Respecting Schools and digital learning. Each group has a clear action plan and clear aims to promote improvement. Children identify changes they have made to their school through their ideas being listened to and acted upon. This includes positive changes to playground equipment and a plan for developing the school garden. Through these groups, children are gaining a better understanding of how they can effect change across their school.
- The previous acting headteacher developed a Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plan to support those children affected by socio-economic disadvantage. A range of interventions has been put in place to support identified individuals and groups of children. These include literacy, numeracy and wellbeing interventions. Staff now need to monitor robustly the impact of these interventions to ensure they are improving outcomes for children. The acting headteacher

should ensure that children, staff and parents are fully consulted about the most appropriate use of PEF.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- The acting headteacher and staff have created a welcoming ethos across the school. In all classes, staff and children co-create class charters, underpinned by children's rights. Most staff use a range of approaches to support children's positive relationships with their peers. Teachers have recently supported children to learn about effective strategies to support them to manage better their behaviour. Occasionally, a few children do not behave well. In these instances, staff respond calmly and support children well to regulate their emotions. Only a minority of children currently feel that other children treat them with respect. The headteacher and staff should continue to refer regularly to the refreshed school values to help support all children to feel respected.
- Teachers use an online auditing tool to evaluate their classroom environments. This is beginning to support them to create engaging and consistent learning environments across the school. All teachers have created 'calm corners' and wall displays adhere to agreed guidelines. Building on this positive approach, teachers should support children to access resources with increasing independence to support and enhance their learning. This has the potential to support children to take more responsibility for their learning.
- In a few lessons, teachers plan learning that is relevant, enjoyable and well-matched to children's abilities. In these lessons, almost all children engage well in their learning. However, in almost all lessons activities are not sufficiently challenging for children. The pace of learning is too slow, and children spend too much time listening to the teacher. This results in the majority of children becoming disengaged. Teachers need to ensure that opportunities for high-quality learning are maximised. They should increase the pace of learning and ensure that children have more opportunities to be actively involved in their learning. Teachers need to ensure that all learning is appropriately challenging for all children, including those children who require additional support.
- The standards of teaching and learning across the school is not yet of consistently high-quality. To address this, teachers are beginning to establish elements of consistency in teaching across the school. They now refer to the recently introduced four-part lesson structure. The acting headteacher should now work with teachers to agree the features of high-quality learning and teaching and what a good lesson looks like.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning with children. Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear in most lessons. They use a range of questioning techniques effectively to enhance understanding and gather information. In a few lessons, teachers use

questioning well to deepen children's thinking. This is beginning to support children to develop their higher order thinking skills. However, in the majority of lessons, activities do not support children appropriately well. Teachers should now ensure that all learning activities are relevant, engaging and planned well to help to ensure that children are successful in their learning.

- Teachers have recently implemented a consistent approach to providing written feedback to children, particularly in children's literacy jotters. Children speak positively about this. Older children explain how they use this feedback to improve their writing. In the minority of lessons, teachers provide effective verbal feedback linked to children's steps to success. In these instances, teachers' feedback enhances children's progress successfully. Teachers need to review the quality of children's steps to success, ensuring these link better to children's learning. Children should be more involved in the creation of these to understand better how to improve their learning.
- Most teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance children's learning in the majority of lessons. Children in the digital pupil leadership group support other children well to use devices responsibly. Children in P6 and P7 have access to individual tablets. All other children have access to shared laptops. A few children across the school benefit from access to assistive technology. This is helping to remove barriers to learning for these children. As planned, teachers and support staff should continue to enhance the range of assistive technology used. Staff should provide more children with opportunities to access their learning independently through digital technology. This has the potential to better support their progress.
- Teachers are at the early stages of implementing well-planned play experiences for younger children. They value the importance of play and recently created attractive and well-resourced learning environments. This helps children to develop their curiosity as they explore these areas. The acting headteacher should support staff to engage with national practice guidance and quality professional learning around high-quality play. Teachers should pay particular attention to creating meaningful opportunities for children to learn through play. They should consider closely the balance of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led experiences and support children to engage more meaningfully in play opportunities.
- Teachers use formative assessment well to enhance children's learning in the minority of lessons. Teachers provide older children with opportunities to assess their own work and the work of others, particularly in writing. Teachers should extend these approaches, ensuring that children are involved in creating and reflecting on their individual learning targets. A next step is to support children to take more responsibility for their learning.
- Teachers use a recently developed assessment calendar to administer a range of assessments to children at agreed times throughout the year. This has improved teachers access to a wide range of assessment data and their understanding of children's progress in learning. Teachers now need to use assessment information more effectively to inform their planning. There is a need to ensure activities are planned at the right level for each child.
- Teachers have engaged in a variety of moderation activities. For example, a few teachers worked collaboratively with colleagues in their cluster to moderate and develop approaches to assessment, particularly in writing. This is beginning to support teachers to understand better national standards and expectations. The acting headteacher should support staff to moderate the quality of children's work, particularly in literacy and numeracy. She should

support all teachers to develop further their understanding of progression pathways and the national Benchmarks.

- All teachers currently plan over the short, medium and long term. These plans link to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. This ensures children are beginning to experience breadth and depth in their learning. Teachers use a variety of planning documents to plan for children's learning. They should now look to streamline their approaches to planning and focus on what children need to do next in their learning.
- Teachers meet with the acting headteacher for planning and tracking meetings. These meetings have been introduced recently, in line with the new quality assurance calendar. At these meetings, teachers are beginning to use a range of data to identify better the progress children make. The acting headteacher recently supported teachers to understand barriers that children may face in their learning. This ensures teachers are beginning to access a wider range of data about individual children. The acting headteacher should continue to support staff to develop their confidence in using the information they gather to plan more appropriately to meet children's needs.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Almost all teachers are beginning to access and use progressive pathways in all areas of the curriculum. These have been created by the local authority. Where these are used well, teachers identify successfully learning opportunities which progress children's learning. All teachers should use these pathways consistently, ensuring that all planned learning opportunities are relevant and meet the needs of all children.
- Teachers effectively use experiences and outcomes from CfE to plan and deliver increasingly engaging learning contexts. For example, older children compare life in Italy to their lives in a rural Scottish village. Teachers refer to a recently implemented three-year curriculum programme. Teachers should continue to develop opportunities for children to become more involved in planning these contexts for learning.
- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of progressively planned, high quality physical education each week. Most children feel that teachers provide them with regular opportunities to exercise.
- Children across the school learn French progressively. Children in P6 and P7 also learn Spanish. Senior leaders now need to review the approach to developing modern languages to ensure all children receive their full entitlement to learning modern languages in line with the national '1+2' initiative.
- Teachers deliver religious and moral education in all classes. Children learn about religious festivals such as the Passover and Easter. Previously, the school benefited from strong links with the local church. This supported teachers to provide opportunities for religious observance. This has been impacted recently by the local minister no longer being in post.
- Teachers are beginning to provide children with opportunities to develop skills through outdoor learning. All children visit the local woods to participate in well-planned outdoor learning experiences. Children speak with excitement about these opportunities. A minority of children participate in the 'eco and gardening' pupil leadership group. They work together to create plans to develop their outdoor spaces. These opportunities support children well to transfer their skills and knowledge to real-life contexts. The acting headteacher should support teachers to implement their recently developed 'outdoor learning, planning, progression and rationale' document. Teachers should ensure all children have more regular opportunities to experience outdoor learning in a planned and progressive way.
- Staff have created a well-stocked school library. Children also borrow books from a library bus on a fortnightly basis. Children speak enthusiastically about having regular opportunities to read in class. This is supporting children effectively to develop their enjoyment of reading. Staff should now look to introducing books which celebrate inclusion and diversity to support children to develop further their understanding of different beliefs and cultures.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are involved meaningfully in the life of the school in a number of ways. This includes attendance at parent evenings and a number of 'sharing the learning' events. Parents enjoy the recently introduced Kettle Café afternoons. These café afternoons are planned and hosted by children. This positive initiative supports children to develop well their communication, organisation and teamwork skills.
- The Parent Council is very supportive of the school and organise a variety of family activities to raise funds for the school. This includes Christmas and Easter fayres and movie nights. Money raised from these events helps the school provide additional resources for children, alongside funding educational excursions to ensure that all children participate. Most parents feel encouraged to be involved in the work of the Parent Council and are kept informed of the work they do.

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

satisfactory

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

- Relationships between children and staff are caring and nurturing across the school. All staff work together effectively to create an environment that promotes positive relationships. Most children agree they have someone they can speak to if they are upset or worried about something. Children and staff co-create class charters based on children's rights and the school values. Staff focus on children's rights during weekly assemblies and identify a 'right of the week' as a school focus. Children are proud of the bronze national accreditation they have received as a result of their work on children's rights. These consistent approaches help children link their rights better to their actions and everyday lives.
- Children, staff and parents were involved recently in reviewing the school's positive relationships and behaviour policy. Children model the 'Advice, Warning, Time to Reflect' framework within the policy well. They talk about the framework confidently and recognise that it supports behaviour positively. All staff celebrate children's positive behaviour. Children are awarded house points or 'Star of the Week' certificates for modelling the school values. Children are proud of the 'Kettle Stars' they receive through their positive attitude to learning. Staff model a consistent approach to managing children's behaviour.
- Staff have recently worked together to audit the learning environments across the school. Newly established 'calm corners' in all classrooms are beginning to support a few children to manage their emotions more effectively within the classroom. A few children use visual symbols to support their learning throughout the day. This is helping to ensure they engage better with their learning within the classroom environment. Children show increased confidence with the routines of the school day and are taking greater responsibility for their learning. The acting headteacher and staff should review all learning environments to ensure they are better equipped to engage all children in learning.
- All children engage in a three-weekly wellbeing programme which consists of a wellbeing activity, a buddy class task and a meeting with their leadership group. Children are at the very early stages of evaluating their own wellbeing. They were recently introduced to an online wellbeing tool which they used to evaluate their wellbeing. Teachers used the information gathered from this to identify a few interventions that could further support individual or groups of children. Staff do not yet have robust data about children's progress in developing their wellbeing. The acting headteacher should ensure that teachers use effectively the data gathered in wellbeing assessments to identify actions and provide appropriate support to improve children's wellbeing.

- Teachers provide a few opportunities for children to explore what they need to do to be healthy and safe through the health and wellbeing curriculum. Almost all children took part recently in an 'Anti-Bullying' week. Most children feel safe at school. Children are aware of the need to be active to ensure a healthy lifestyle. Children now need to experience well-planned and progressive opportunities to explore important aspects of health and wellbeing. Staff should review the school's health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure that it reflects the context of the school and meets the needs of all children. This should be done in consultation with the whole school community.
- Most children feel their school helps them to lead a healthy lifestyle. All children participate in regular exercise. Older children take part in weekly rugby and 'Be Active' sessions provided by partners. Younger children take part in weekly physical literacy sessions. These activities help to improve children's physical fitness.
- All staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities and statutory duties to improve outcomes for children. Through annual mandatory training, all staff are familiar with child protection guidelines, in line with national guidance. Clerical staff share child protection guidance with staff and visitors.
- Staff follow local authority guidance for identifying children who may have additional support needs. Children's support plans and child's plans help to ensure that identified targets are appropriate in supporting individual children's progress. A few children benefit from wellbeing sessions which focus on building positive relationships. These sessions include storytelling, baking and wellbeing activities and support children to manage their emotions well and re-engage with learning more quickly. The acting headteacher should now review the effectiveness of all interventions to ensure they are improving outcomes for children.
- Children in the Rights Respecting Schools group recently worked together to develop a Christmas emergency pack for children across the world who live in poverty. Through their engagement with this project, children's understanding and awareness of equality increased. The acting headteacher and staff should ensure that all children have increased opportunities to understand, promote and celebrate inclusion and diversity. They should ensure that children fully understand their place in the world as global citizens to help develop further their skills and understanding of different races and cultures.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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

- The school roll comprises of small numbers of children at each stage. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is weak. Overall, the minority of children achieve nationally expected CfE levels in literacy and the majority achieve in numeracy. The majority of children across the school are capable of achieving considerably more.
- The minority of children who require additional support with their learning make appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, only a minority of children make good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, the majority of children make an attempt to take turns when listening and talking. Most children follow simple instructions well. All children need opportunities to practise listening to and saying single sounds and sounds made by a combination of letters. At first level, most children communicate clearly and audibly. The majority of children take turns and contribute at the appropriate time when engaging with others. A minority of children should practice responding to different types of questions to show an understanding of the main ideas of discussions. At second level, most children show respect for others and build on contributions during class and group discussions. They communicate clearly, audibly and with expression. All children would benefit from increased opportunities to plan and deliver presentations to a wider audience.

Reading

- At early level, most children contribute to discussions about events and characters relevant to a book. They enjoy listening to different stories and understand that they should read from left to right. Most children recognise the majority of single sounds made by single letters. As a priority, all children now need support to learn all the single sounds and recognise sounds made by a combination of letters. They should then be supported to use this knowledge to begin to blend and to read words. At first level, most children identify successfully the main ideas of texts and answer correctly literal questions relating to stories. They recognise the difference between fact and opinion. The majority of children should have increased opportunities to

develop their decoding skills. A next step is for staff to help them to read aloud with increased fluency, expression and understanding. At second level, most children read with fluency and expression. They scan texts successfully to find key information. A minority of children should be supported to develop further their understanding of techniques authors use to influence the reader.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children form lowercase letters legibly. They are beginning to use a pencil with increasing control and confidence. All children should now be encouraged to attempt to use a capital letter and full stop in at least one sentence, leaving a space between words. At first level, most children organise writing in a logical way and include relevant information in written texts. The majority of children need more support to practise punctuating sentences accurately and start sentences in a variety of ways. At second level, the majority of children write most sentences in a grammatically accurate way and use paragraphs to separate thoughts and ideas. They apply their knowledge of spelling strategies to spell most words correctly. At first and second levels, the majority of children should be supported to develop their handwriting skills to present their writing in a clear and legible way. As a priority, all children across the school should have increased opportunities to produce more regular, extended pieces of writing. Staff should help children to develop further and apply the skills they learn through spelling and grammar lessons.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children recognise numbers between 0-20 accurately. They are confident in ordering numbers 0-20. Most children at early level add within 10 accurately and recognise o'clock. All children at early level require support to subtract within 10 and to recognise coins to £2. At first level, most children are building their confidence in mental agility and round two-and three-digit numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. Most children read analogue times and represent this on a clock face. All children at first level need support to write and to order fractions. They require further support to solve two-step problems. At second level, most children multiply and divide whole numbers by multiples of 10, 100 and 1000. Most children are confident to complete written and mental calculations involving multiplication and division. Children are not yet confident with calculating percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. Most children identify and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. At first level, all children name and identify a range of simple 2D shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects correctly. All children now need opportunities to consolidate their use of mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. At second level, almost all children identify and classify a range of angles, including, acute and obtuse. Most children recognise a range of 3D objects and talk about their properties using vertices, edges and corners.

Information handling

- At early level, most children recognise and extend simple patterns, using shapes and colours. All children contribute to pictorial displays where one object or drawing represents one data value. At first level, most children extract key information from different types of graphs. They talk about ways in which they would gather and organise information. At second level, most children name a variety of graphs including bar and line graphs and can gather a range of information from these.

Attainment over time

- Attendance is currently 94.4% and has been in line with the national figure for the past three years. A minority of children have absence greater than 10%. The main reasons for these absences are family holidays and illness. The acting headteacher monitors effectively children's attendance and issues letters to parents to highlight the impact of persistent absence. Where appropriate, the acting headteacher works closely with parents and external partners to improve attendance for children whose attendance is below 90%. This is supporting to maintain positive levels of attendance across the school and to improve attendance for individuals. There are currently no children who attend school on a part-time timetable.
- The acting headteacher recognises that teachers' professional judgements relating to children's attainment and progress are not yet reliable. This has had an adverse impact on staff's ability to monitor robustly children's attainment and progress over time. Across the school, the majority of children are capable of making better progress in their learning. As a priority, the acting headteacher and teachers should improve the quality of learning and teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy in order that children are better supported to reach their potential.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff celebrate successfully children's personal achievements during assemblies. Children speak with pride about receiving star awards for displaying the school values. This supports children to develop confidence and self-esteem. The acting headteacher has started recently to track children's personal achievements and awards. This supports her well to identify children who may be missing out on opportunities to share and celebrate their achievements.
- The acting headteacher and staff provide children with meaningful opportunities to develop important leadership skills. For example, all children are members of leadership groups, such as the gardening group and sports group. A few children across the school attend an afternoon club which provides experiences such as baking and cooking. Additionally, the majority of children across the school attend sporting opportunities provided by partners. Children develop skills in creativity, teamwork and collaboration through these clubs. As planned, the acting headteacher should track and monitor children's attendance at clubs in and out of school.

Equity for all learners

- Most staff know children and families well. They have an increasing understanding of the barriers that exist for families, such as financial challenges and obstacles linked to residing in a rural community. Staff work well to remove barriers that families may face. For example, they provide a uniform swap shop, pre-loved Christmas jumpers, and where appropriate, work with external partners to help families access financial support. They also work closely with the

Parent Council to subsidise trips to the pantomime and P7 residential experience. These strategies help to reduce costs associated with the school day and help to ensure all children are included in the experiences on offer. The acting headteacher should ensure that greater care is taken to provide this support to families who may benefit from this the most.

- The acting headteacher uses additional funding, including PEF, to provide additional teaching and support staff hours. Teachers and support staff lead interventions to support children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The acting headteacher and teachers should evaluate these interventions more robustly to identify which interventions have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for children.

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.