

Summarised inspection findings

St Bride's RC Primary School

Fife Council

3 March 2026

Key contextual information

St Brides Primary School is a denominational school located in Cowdenbeath, Fife. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 185 children taught across eight classes. The headteacher has been in post since 2018 and is supported by a depute headteacher. There are approximately 81% of children living within Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation zones 1-3. Approximately 30% of pupils require additional support with their learning. Across P6 and P7, 33% of children are registered for free school meals.

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

- Almost all staff create a nurturing and inclusive learning environment, underpinned by the school values of 'respect, achieve and believe'. These values are embedded well in the life of the school and are evident in almost all interactions between children, and between children and staff. Relationships are warm, positive and characterised by mutual trust. Most children are polite, respectful and behave well.
- All staff have high expectations of behaviour, and this is supported by the effective use of class charters. These are displayed consistently across all classes. Staff work well with children to create the content of these and relate them to the Catholic Charter. This ensures that all children have ownership of their class charter. Children access spaces, such as calm corners and break out areas, independently to regulate their emotions. Staff manage sensitively any instances of dysregulated behaviour and provide children with appropriate support. Most children demonstrate a positive attitude towards learning and display high levels of engagement in the majority of lessons.
- Most teachers create attractive and well organised learning environments. In most classrooms, displays showcase and celebrate children's work and achievements. In a few classrooms, teachers create displays that include children's voice well. Across the school, teachers ensure that meta-skills are displayed clearly and referred to regularly as part of lessons. Most children recognise and discuss confidently the meta-skills they use in their learning. As a next step, teachers now need to track children's progress to determine how well they learn and use these skills. This has the potential to support staff to identify and address any gaps in learning as children move through the school.
- Senior leaders and teachers have worked well together to create a helpful learning and teaching policy. This is used increasingly by staff across all classes to work towards establishing

consistency in high quality learning and teaching. Whilst some aspects of this policy are successful, senior leaders and staff should now consider refreshing this policy. In doing so, they should consult with children and families. A next step is to ensure that all staff and stakeholders have a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching across the school.

- In most lessons, most children understand the purpose of learning and the steps required to be successful. In a few classes, children are involved in co-creating steps to success with their class teacher. Across the school, most teachers use a variety of questioning techniques to clarify children's understanding. This supports children across the school to develop well their higher order thinking skills. Most teachers use randomiser tools and discourage 'hands up' during questioning activities. This helps to increase children's engagement and motivation during lessons.
- Most staff plan learning which provides children with appropriate levels of support and challenge in the majority of lessons. Most staff provide children with opportunities to work individually and in groups to discuss and share their ideas. Most children are motivated and engaged in their learning during these times. However, a minority of lessons are overly teacher led. In a majority of classes, the pace of learning is too slow. This leads to children becoming disengaged in their learning. Teachers should ensure that children are provided with increased opportunities to lead their own learning. Across the school, a minority of children should be challenged further in their learning.
- Almost all teachers provide effective written and verbal feedback which helps children to understand what they need to do to improve their learning. Across the school, most children assess their own work and the work of their peers, particularly in writing. This supports children to take responsibility for their learning and to understand better how to improve. Staff should continue to develop the consistency of feedback to ensure that this leads to improved outcomes for all children. Staff should provide children with increased opportunities to edit or redraft their work based on the feedback they receive.
- Staff provide children at the early stages with well-planned and appropriate play experiences. Senior leaders and teachers use a school play policy. This helps to ensure that children's play experiences are consistent across the early stages. For example, staff ensure that learning environments are well resourced and engaging. This helps to support and develop children's curiosity and interests well. Teachers balance child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-directed activities well. These approaches enhance effectively children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use helpful observation records during play experiences to assess children's progress and to identify their next steps in learning. As planned, senior leaders should now extend play-based approaches further across the school.
- Staff support children to use digital resources independently and confidently. These include tablets, laptops, coding devices and interactive whiteboards which are embedded well in daily learning and teaching across most classes. Staff display a digital charter in each classroom and the 'Digital Dragons' pupil leadership group helps to enhance the use of digital resources across the school. This includes supporting younger children to develop their digital skills through coding and introducing them to helpful applications. The school's focus on the use of digital technologies has led to them receiving national accreditation. Teachers use a digital skills pathway to plan learning in a coherent way for children across the school. Staff are now well

placed to track the digital skills that children are developing to ensure consistency and progression as they move through the school.

- Most teachers use formative assessment strategies well to encourage children to share what they have learned and show their understanding. All teachers use assessment folders to collate examples of summative assessments of children's progress in numeracy. These, alongside the use of a range of diagnostic assessments, support teachers to identify the next steps in learning for children. As planned, senior leaders should continue to develop an annual assessment calendar. This has the potential to ensure that all teachers use a consistent approach to inform their decisions about children's progress and next steps in learning.
- All teachers participate in informal moderation processes across the school through discussions with colleagues. This has mainly focused on the moderation of writing. As planned, teachers should now participate in planned moderation activities which include working with colleagues from other schools. This should further develop their understanding of national standards to ensure they make robust judgements of levels of attainment.
- All teachers plan well for children's learning termly across the session. They plan learning effectively and collaboratively using Fife Council's progression frameworks across all curricular areas. These frameworks are linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Senior leaders have recently introduced a local authority digital planning tool to support teachers' planning. This supports teachers to review children's progress as they move through CfE levels. It has the potential to help to ensure that teachers plan for an appropriate breadth and depth of learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers discuss children's progress in learning across the year through attainment meetings. At these meetings, senior leaders and teachers focus on the progress children make in literacy and numeracy. This dialogue supports staff to identify the next steps in learning for children. Senior leaders currently manage a large amount of data which limits their ability to use it strategically to improve learning and teaching. As a next step, senior leaders should now streamline the data they collect. This should enable them to analyse more effectively how well cohorts and groups of learners are progressing and evaluate more robustly the impact of interventions.

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, young people. 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

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. At early level, most children achieve expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. At first and second levels, most children achieve expected CfE levels in reading and listening and talking, and the majority achieve expected CfE levels in writing. At first level, most children achieve expected CfE levels in numeracy. At second level, the majority of children achieve expected CfE levels in numeracy. Across the school, a minority of children are exceeding expectations in literacy and numeracy.
- The majority of children who require additional support with learning make good progress from prior levels of attainment or towards individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress in reading and listening and talking. The majority of children make good progress in writing.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children follow simple instructions. They ask questions and respond well when posed with a question from adults or peers. A few children would benefit from further opportunities to explore rhyming. At first level, most children listen well and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way. They recognise and discuss differences between fact and opinion. A few children should be supported to develop further their turn-taking skills, ensuring they contribute at the appropriate time during interactions with others. At second level, most children contribute appropriately to discussions, sharing well their ideas and opinions. They respond to a range of questions, including inferential and evaluative questions, to demonstrate their understanding. A few children need more practice to develop further their use of non-verbal techniques, such as eye contact, during presentations and interactions.

Reading

- At early level, most children read aloud familiar texts with attention to simple punctuation. They use knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. A minority of children should attempt to 'have a go' at reading tricky words in a text. At first level, most children explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. They decode unknown words by pronouncing familiar letter patterns and blends. They identify key information and ideas well. At second level, most children apply a range of skills to read and understand texts. For example, they skim and scan well unfamiliar texts to identify main ideas and to find key

information. They identify and discuss features of language, such as figurative expressions and interesting vocabulary. At first and second levels, a minority of children should be supported to develop further their fluency and expression when reading aloud, paying attention to punctuation to help them with this.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children write a simple sentence with increasing confidence. They make an attempt to spell common words accurately. A minority of children need more support to develop further their use of capital letters and full stops. At first level, most children organise writing in a logical order, including relevant information and ideas. The majority of children start sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader. They spell most commonly used words correctly and link sentences using common conjunctives. Children need more practice to develop further their ability to punctuate sentences accurately and to check their writing makes sense. At second level, children use notes well to develop their thinking. They attempt to use language in their writing to influence the reader, such as metaphors and similes. A majority of children at second level use a range of punctuation accurately and use paragraphs to separate thoughts and ideas. Most children would benefit from opportunities to review and correct their writing, ensuring it makes sense and is technically accurate.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children recognise and identify numbers between 1 and 20. They identify the number before, the number after and missing numbers in a sequence within 20. Almost all children identify all coins to £2. Most children would benefit from ongoing practice with adding and subtracting numbers within 10. At first level, most children identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. They use the correct notation to write common fractions. The majority of children use a variety of coin and note combinations, to pay for items and give change within £10. Almost all children use their knowledge of everyday objects to estimate length and height. A few children would benefit from extra support with this. At second level, most children confidently round whole numbers to the nearest 1000 and 10,000. Most children calculate simple fractions of a quantity and use this knowledge to solve problems. Children lack confidence when calculating the durations of activities using both 12-hour clock and 24-hour notation.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and describe common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and most children recognise common three-dimensional (3D) objects. They require further support to correctly use the language of position and direction. At first level, most children name, identify and classify a range of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects. The majority of children identify symmetry in patterns, pictures and 2D shapes. Children would benefit from further support in applying their knowledge of symmetry. At second level, the majority of children describe 3D objects and 2D shapes using specific vocabulary correctly, including regular and irregular. They need further support to understand and use the terms radius, diameter and circumference accurately in relation to circles. Most children use accurate mathematical language, including acute, obtuse and straight, to describe and classify a range of angles.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children use their knowledge of colour and shape well to match and sort items in different ways. Most children can answer questions about a simple bar graph. At first level, most children answer questions related to a variety of data sets including charts, diagrams and bar graphs. At second level, most children analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a variety of data. Most children collect, organise and display data accurately in a variety of ways including bar graphs, line graphs, and simple pie charts.

Attainment over time

- Attendance data has improved steadily over the past few years, with children's attendance currently at 93%. Senior leaders monitor attendance data and trends closely and consistently. They respond swiftly and appropriately to address any emerging issues, applying their attendance policy effectively. Senior leaders maintain frequent contact with families, offering support to encourage and sustain good attendance. They develop personalised attendance plans where appropriate and document well records of meetings and subsequent changes in attendance. Senior leaders also monitor successfully instances of late coming and address the impact of this with parents. A few children attend school on a part time basis. Senior leaders meet regularly with parents and partners to review these arrangements. This is having a positive impact on identified children and is increasing their time in school.
- Senior leaders cannot yet demonstrate confidently attainment trends over time. Data indicates consistent dips in literacy and numeracy attainment as children progress from early to first levels. Senior leaders recognise the need to streamline approaches to collating data and to ensure they track and analyse better the attainment of cohorts of children. Senior leaders need to support further all teachers to ensure they have a strong understanding of national standards. These are necessary steps to make attainment data more reliable and consistent.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children have a wide range of opportunities to achieve. These include through the Digital Dragon Awards and Assembly Stars which recognise children's use of meta skills and for representing the school in local and national events. Children celebrate their achievements weekly at assembly and most children talk confidently about the skills they learn through their participation in these activities. This ensures that children recognise the range of skills they achieve and they talk confidently about how these skills link to their everyday lives. Staff track children's wider achievements both in and out with school. This ensures that all children have an opportunity to achieve and celebrate their successes.
- Children contribute successfully to the life of the school through a number of leadership opportunities. They develop well their confidence and show responsibility through taking on roles such as the 'Mini Vinnies', digital leaders, buddies and junior leaders. These opportunities ensure children contribute fully to the life of the school and the wider community. They support children to be successful and understand well their role as global citizens.
- Children's participation in clubs and activities is monitored by school staff and partners. Children in P7 who are junior leaders help to support this process and identify those children who do not take part in any clubs or activities. They offer these children the opportunity to take part in activities such as cycling, netball, football and dance. This ensures that all children develop a range of skills and sense of achievement through their participation.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and all staff demonstrate a strong commitment to equity. The headteacher works sensitively with staff and parents to actively reduce financial barriers for all children and families. A Cost of the School Day policy has been created that highlights ways that the school can support families. This includes the provision of pre-loved uniforms in the Sainty Snug and ensures that activities, such as visits to the local pantomime, are accessible for all children. As a result of this focus, all children have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the school.
- The headteacher consults with staff, children and parents on the use of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). The leadership team identify appropriate and targeted interventions to support children, such as in writing and through play. Senior leaders now need to ensure that all identified interventions are being evaluated regularly. This is needed to close attainment gaps and to ensure that identified children continue to make accelerated progress.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children learn French from P1 to P7 and Spanish from P5 to P7. This is taught in a planned and progressive way as children move through the school.
- Children are receiving their entitlement to religious education and observance in line with national expectations.

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.