

Summarised inspection findings

Old Monkland Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

1 October 2024

Key contextual information

Old Monkland Primary School is situated in the Kirkwood area of Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 121 children. There is also a nursery class. The headteacher has been in post for nineteen years. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant staffing challenges resulting in most classes having temporary teachers at various points over time. The headteacher is assisted by two principal teachers. One of these posts is funded using Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Almost all children lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1-4.

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

- Staff ensure a welcoming and caring ethos which is underpinned by the school's well-known motto of 'every child is special.' Relationships between the children and all staff are very positive. This supports almost all children to feel safe and enjoy their learning. Children work well together and are polite and kind to one another. This is leading to children learning in calm and focused environments in almost all classes. All staff demonstrate deep knowledge of children's needs and commitment to supporting the pastoral and learning needs of all children well. This results in most children sustaining high levels of engagement and enthusiasm in almost all aspects of their learning.
- Almost all children display consistently positive behaviours. Local authority link officers support the headteacher and staff to promote positive behaviour with a current focus on approaches to positive relationships and inclusive and nurturing practices. Local authority officers support staff as required, for example, through guidance, signposting support and regular training.
- Staff should work together with children, to create a whole school understanding of the attributes of effective learning. Across the school, most teachers engage in direct teaching too often with whole classes. The majority of teachers create meaningful activities for children to learn in pairs and in groups regularly. They should strengthen approaches to ensuring they are meeting the needs of all learners, especially in multi-stage classes and for those children who require additional support and challenge.
- In most lessons, teachers refer to previous learning effectively to ensure children progress across the curriculum areas. They use clear explanations and instructions to ensure children are ready to engage with tasks and activities. This supports children well to understand the purpose of their learning and make connections to prior learning. In most lessons, teachers ensure children are clear about what they will learn and how they can be successful in their learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers use feedback and questioning skilfully to help children progress. They should continue to extend children's skills in reviewing their own progress and that of their peers to enable them to identify what they know and their next steps

for learning. In the majority of curriculum areas, teachers plan challenging tasks and activities that are relevant to the planned learning outcome. At all stages and especially in multi-stage classes, teachers need to ensure all children experience appropriately challenging learning activities across all areas of the curriculum.

- In a few classes, teachers use digital technology creatively to extend and deepen children's learning. Almost all teachers use commercial educational games aimed at consolidating aspects of literacy and numeracy. A group of children are identified 'digital leaders.' They help children and staff across the school and nursery class to work with aspects of digital technology and to overcome technical issues. As planned, staff should continue to develop further children's digital literacy experiences through their learning across the school.
- In a few classes, children have planned opportunities to lead aspects of their learning. In the majority of classes, children benefit from meaningful opportunities which actively involve them in the learning process. In most classes, children have the opportunity to exercise choice in many of their learning activities, which is helping to promote enthusiasm and motivation in their learning. As a next step, teachers should work with children to help them create further leadership opportunities at all stages of their learning. This will help them to develop their capacity for self-direction and confidence.
- The headteacher recognises that approaches to play-based learning are at a very early stage of development. As a next step, staff should engage with national practice guidance to support their understanding and implementation of play. This should inform their continuing development of effective interactions with children and of play environments. Teachers should develop further the range of learning experiences they provide at the early stages. This will help to ensure all children experience learning opportunities that support them to make appropriate progress in their learning.
- The Attainment Leadership Team (ALT) supports staff well through the use of a range of assessments to identify children's progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Teachers meet with members of the extended leadership team termly to discuss the progress of children in their class and agree interventions to support learning. This supports staff to identify and monitor the progress of children who need additional support. The support staff team provides effective support to children across the school. They know the needs of individual children well and provide a range of appropriate support to enable them to engage in learning.
- Currently moderation activity is limited and focusses on outcomes of assessment. Teachers would benefit from moderating planning for learning, teaching and assessment, and develop further their understanding of the 'Learning, Teaching, Assessment (Moderation) Cycle'. Teachers should continue their engagement with the national Benchmarks to strengthen their awareness of national standards and expectations. As planned, they would benefit from participation in a programme of moderation activities within their own school and with colleagues in other schools. This would help them develop a shared understanding of children's progress within and across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. It would also help to increase their confidence when making professional judgements about children's achievement of a level.
- Most teachers make good use of local authority progression pathways to inform planning across different timescales. The school has developed an overview of these pathways for literacy. Teachers use an overview of CfE experiences and outcomes. However this is not yet ensuring teachers plan progressive learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum. They should ensure they plan progressive learning experiences which build on children's prior

learning across all curriculum areas. Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches to measure children's progress across the curriculum. Assessment now needs to become an integral feature of teachers' planning for learning and teaching.

- The headteacher monitors and tracks attainment across classes and this is used to inform decisions to support children's learning. The newly developed digital tracking system, once embedded, will enable senior leaders, together with class teachers, to work collegiately to identify strategies and interventions to raise attainment. As part of this, senior leaders should use the tracking system to enable them to track the progress of specific cohorts of learners.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- In June 2023, most children attained nationally expected CfE levels in listening and talking and in reading. The majority make expected progress in writing. Most children achieved numeracy at early level by the end of P1 and the majority of children achieved at first level by the end of P4. Most children achieved expected national levels in numeracy by the end of P7. The reliability of data supplied by the school is improving, currently helped by some newly introduced standardised assessments and improving approaches to moderation.
- The majority of children, who receive additional support to access their learning, make appropriate progress against their individual learning targets for literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the stages, most children are making satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Most children are making good progress in listening and talking, from their prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- At early level most children ask relevant questions and respond appropriately to staff and each other. Children are beginning to develop well their listening skills and are learning how to be an active listener. At first level, most children listen well to others and make appropriate responses to questions, cues and prompts. They show appreciation for the contributions of others. Most children summarise confidently the key areas of the plot from a current book or novel. At second level, most children build upon the views of others and support others' opinions and ideas. They listen very well to each other and to teachers' instructions.

Reading

- At early level, the majority of children use their knowledge of sounds and letters to decode words. They talk with confidence about books they are reading and identify the title, cover and author of a book. At first level, the majority of children read aloud fluently, confidently and with expression. The majority of children are not yet confident in using appropriate comprehension strategies to identify techniques used by authors to engage the reader.
- The majority of children at first and second levels demonstrate understanding and give their opinions confidently about plot, setting and characters in texts. At second level, the majority of children discuss confidently authors' literary techniques used in a text to engage the reader.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children are beginning to write independently using some known common words. The majority of children form most letters legibly. Children would benefit from more opportunities to invent their own stories and characters to share with others. At first level,

children use connectives and common sentence openers to suit the context. Children are becoming more skilled at creating extended texts regularly for a variety of purposes. This is a current whole-school area for improvement at all stages. At second level, most children understand how word choice affects tone, style and context and they include vocabulary that is suitable for the reader. Most children at second level are developing well their skill and confidence to write for a wider range of audiences and purposes and at extended length. At all stages, children need regular practice to edit their work and use taught punctuation independently and accurately.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children at early level are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Most children at first and second levels are making good progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children recognise numbers, add and subtract within 20. At first level, most children understand place value to thousands. They apply addition and subtraction skills using a range of coins and compare numbers using symbols of greater than and less than. Most children record 12-hour times using am and pm and identify 24-hour notation. Teachers should develop challenge through further presentation of word problems to check understanding. At second level most children confidently calculate profit and loss and use knowledge of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. At all levels, children need more opportunities to apply their number, money and measure skills in a range of real-life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children identify and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. At first level, most children recognise two-dimensional shapes and simple three-dimensional (3D) objects. They describe, plot and use accurate two figure grid references, demonstrating knowledge of the horizontal and vertical location. At second level, most children confidently identify the properties of 3D objects. They have a strong understanding of mathematical language including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe and classify a range of angles and successfully calculate their measurement using a protractor.

Information handling

- At early level, most children contribute to concrete or pictorial displays where one object or drawing represents one data value. At first level, most children confidently answer questions to extract key information from a variety of data sets including charts, diagrams, bar graphs and tables. At second level, most children interpret and draw conclusions from a variety of data. They use the language of probability accurately to describe the likelihood of simple events occurring. Children across all levels would benefit from opportunities to use technology to support them in gathering and displaying data in different ways.

Attainment over time

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress over time in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher is currently working with the local authority to establish more robust systems to gather information about children's progress over time. These systems should be embedded as planned next session. Teachers should begin to monitor children's progress and attainment in all areas of the curriculum as new systems to monitor progress are embedded.
- Senior leaders and teachers currently track the progress of children across the school. This will improve further with new systems in place from next session. This will allow senior leaders and teachers to track the progress and attainment of children with protected characteristics and other groups who may require bespoke interventions and support, to be successful in their

learning. Most children who have a home language other than English are achieving nationally expected CfE levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy.

Attendance

- Senior leaders monitor pupil attendance regularly and address barriers to attendance. They have identified a targeted cohort where attendance is a concern and put in place specific interventions to support families. The nurturing approaches evident across the school ensures families are supported to improve children's attendance. Senior leaders have recently developed attendance alert letters which go to parents sharing concerns where attendance is less than 90%. This is having a positive impact on attendance levels for some children.
- The school cluster are working proactively to share attendance information early in the school year for all children at P7. This is supporting a few children to transition into secondary school with improved levels of attendance.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Across the school children's successes are celebrated in a wide variety of ways, including Star of the Week, 'Feel Good Friday' assemblies and 'Happy Houses'. Systems allowing staff to record pupil achievements and participation in activities has been introduced. This is helping staff to have a clearer picture of the skills children are developing. Parents have the opportunity to inform the school of children's achievements within the snapshot jotters. A few children are involved in leadership roles in school groups such as pupil council and digital buddies, which actively seek views of the wider school community. The school should consider how to increase leadership opportunities for all children. Wider learning experiences for children need to be designed in a way that highlights the skills they are developing.
- Teachers offer children across the school a broad variety of opportunities for wider achievement. These include Lego, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and coding clubs. Senior leaders have begun to track children's participation in school clubs and should continue to develop this further to include out of school achievements. This will ensure that all children have opportunities for a wider range of successes and that no child misses out. Teachers should now help children to identify the skills that they are achieving through these opportunities.
- The school has achieved an award for their work in recognising children's rights and is continuing to develop children's awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This work is evident across the school and as a result, children talk confidently about their rights.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a good understanding of contextual factors that impact on the lives of children and their families. Their recent focused work on reducing the cost of the school day has ensured that all children are able to fully engage in school life. School staff offer a range of free after school clubs and experiences at little or no cost to ensure no child misses out. The Parent Council supports the school well by providing financial support for children who need it through fundraising events and running a pre-loved uniform bank.
- The headteacher uses PEF to implement targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and in health and wellbeing. Senior leaders track and monitor the impact of this work carefully. There is evidence to demonstrate that these interventions are supporting children's progress in closing identified gaps. Moving forward, the headteacher should include parents and stakeholders in the allocation of PEF funds to support targeted areas of school improvement.

- Partnerships with community learning and development, are having a positive impact on supporting families living in poverty, ensuring families can access a wide variety of partners and resources to relieve financial burdens and improve their lives and family wellbeing.

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 the school and the school meals provider.

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.