

Summarised inspection findings

Laurencekirk Primary School

Aberdeenshire Council

19 May 2026

Key contextual information

Laurencekirk Primary School is a non-denominational primary school serving the village of Laurencekirk and the surrounding rural areas in Aberdeenshire Council. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 386 children organised across 15 classes. Approximately 23 % of children are recorded by school staff as requiring additional support for their learning. Around a half of all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 9 and 10 and approximately 43% reside in deciles 6 and 7. A nursery and enhanced provision also operates within the campus. The headteacher has been in post for around 5 years and is supported by a depute headteacher and an acting depute headteacher.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
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	

- The highly visible headteacher, senior leaders and staff, have a clear vision for improvement and are ambitious for all children. Staff, parents and children worked very well recently, in partnership with a consultancy agency, to review and refresh the school's vision, values and aims. The school's values of respect, responsibility, relationships and resilience are evident across the school. Parents, children and staff feel these values are relevant to the current context and reflect their high aspirations for the school community. Staff refer to the values well through daily interactions and in conversations with children. The headteacher and senior leaders discuss the school values regularly at school assemblies. This is helping children to have a positive understanding of what their values mean in action. Children are proud of their school and articulate the school vision of 'we grow, learn and never give up' very well. The vision, values and aims provide a common, ambitious goal for the school community to work towards and achieve.
- Senior leaders and staff identify and agree the school improvement plan (SIP) priorities using a range of self-evaluation data to inform decision making. For example, they use information gathered through feedback from children and analysis of attainment data to inform planning for improvement. The current SIP sets out clear priorities which reflect local and national initiatives. These include improving attainment in reading and developing approaches to deliver appropriate challenge and support for children in numeracy. Senior leaders and staff have developed a useful pupil and family friendly version of the SIP. They display this prominently within the school and share regular updates with parents on progress towards improvement priorities through the school website. Senior leaders and staff have identified clear outcome statements within the SIP. This supports them well to measure more accurately progress towards achieving success. Senior leaders should now review the pace of change. This should

help ensure that all initiatives are sustainable and deliver the desired outcomes. In addition, they should provide sufficient time for staff to evaluate, adapt and improve approaches to achieve the best outcomes for children's learning.

- Staff engage effectively in the professional review and development process. Senior leaders and staff have developed a useful collegiate calendar. This sets out clearly professional learning and key activities across the year for staff to undertake and develop their practice further. Teachers use the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards well to reflect on their practice. Staff increasingly link their professional learning targets to aspects of school improvement. This is helping to enhance change and improvement by focussing the professional growth of staff on the current development needs of the school.
- Senior leaders and staff work well together to evaluate the work of the school. They use a helpful quality assurance calendar to support them to organise this important work. This outlines the activities senior leaders and staff undertake to evaluate the quality of the work of the school. Senior leaders sample children's work, visit classes and provide feedback to teachers on the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders should now implement a few quality assurance activities with greater rigour. For example, reviewing the consistency and quality of feedback children receive on their work across the curriculum. This should help promote further effective self-evaluation to support continuous improvement.
- Staff across the school are developing well a positive culture of collaboration and shared leadership. They contribute to positive improvement and change within the school in order to improve children's experiences. For example, teachers worked collaboratively to develop and enhance the school library. They audited books, digital resources and considered the library layout. Consequently, most children now engage enthusiastically in the library and have developed a positive culture of reading for enjoyment. Pupil support assistants (PSAs) lead targeted approaches well to support children's learning. This includes gardening, and cooking activities. This is helping to improve children's social interactions, engagement and sense of wellbeing. A minority of teachers would welcome greater opportunities to take on leadership roles within the school. Senior leaders should now take forward their plans to focus staff leadership more effectively on SIP priorities. This should promote further constructive teamwork, sustainability and enhance teacher engagement in whole school improvement.
- Senior leaders and staff have established very effective structures to support and develop pupil leadership across the school. Children collaborate well in pupil voice groups and committees. They engage meaningfully in roles which influence successfully the direction of school improvement. Children across the school engage in a 'dotmocracy' voting approach to successfully share their views on important decisions within the school. The digital leaders group worked with children across the school to identify digital devices that would better support their learning. Children have undertaken training to be school mediators and successfully promote positive relationships within the playground. These leadership roles support children well to understand that they have an active and meaningful part to play in school improvement. A few children lead a range of achievement clubs including chess, football and dance. Almost all children feel that staff listen to their views when making decisions. Children are proud of the contribution they make to the life of the school.

- Parents increasingly influence aspects of improvement and change within the school. Staff review and act on feedback from parents' questionnaires and consultation activities at 'in person' events in school. For example, parents' views were crucial in developing the school's positive relationships policy. A minority of parents would appreciate more information about how their views are taken into account when making changes within the school. Senior leaders should now take forward their plans to enhance further parental consultation. This should help parents take a more meaningful role in school improvement and ensure that they are important partners in supporting their child's education. This should help foster a stronger collaboration between parents and school and help deliver better outcomes for all children.
- The staff team demonstrate a strong understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. Senior leaders consult meaningfully on Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) investment with staff, children and parents. This informs successfully decision making in identifying appropriate interventions to support children's learning and wellbeing.

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

- Senior leaders have worked successfully with the whole school community to create a positive, nurturing and inclusive ethos, underpinned by well-considered school values. The whole school community prioritise children's rights and wellbeing through a focus on resilience, respect, responsibility and relationships, as core features of their practice. As a result, almost all children behave very well and are highly respectful towards each other. This creates a positive climate for learning. Children are very well-mannered, welcoming to adults and proud of their school.
- Staff have worked collaboratively to review learning spaces, both indoors and outdoors. They have created effective learning environments that include the resources and breakout spaces necessary to support children's independence and increase engagement in learning. Staff use learning walls and displays well to promote resilience and independence in learning. As a result, almost all children are engaged and motivated to learn.
- Senior leaders and staff have developed the 'Excellent Lesson in Laurencekirk' guidance document. This is supporting staff effectively to develop a better understanding of high-quality learning and teaching. In most lessons, teachers provide helpful explanations. They share the purpose of learning effectively with children and highlight what successful learning will look like. In a few lessons, teachers encourage children to co-construct steps to success. Teachers should now share and develop this practice consistently across the school. This should help make learning more relevant and provide further opportunity for children to lead their learning.
- In most lessons, teachers provide children with regular and helpful verbal feedback, for example, through mid lesson plenaries. This helps children understand how well they have achieved during lessons. Senior leaders and teachers should now develop a more consistent approach to the use of written feedback across the curriculum. This should help children to better understand their progress and next steps in learning.
- Teachers have engaged in professional learning to support their digital skills. As a result, children are experiencing a wide range of digital applications to support and enhance their learning and engagement. Almost all children log on to devices and access online learning independently. They engage well with online activities that help them practise and extend their literacy and numeracy skills. A few children, who require support with their learning, use assistive technology and software effectively to access the curriculum. Children across the school benefit from a dedicated pupil led 'Digital Leaders' group who support younger children

effectively to develop their digital skills. Consequently, children use digital devices with increasing skill and confidence.

- In most lessons, teachers provide an effective range of teaching approaches which include direct teaching, collaborative activities and independent learning. They provide useful activities for older children to work alongside younger children. Support staff interact well with individuals and small groups of children to enhance their learning and engagement. In most lessons, teachers support children who require additional help in their learning positively. In a minority of lessons, children's learning is overly teacher led and the pace of learning for children needs to increase. Teachers should ensure that tasks are set at the right level of difficulty and the pace of learning meets the needs of all children.
- Most children at early level develop independence and social skills through well-planned and purposeful play. Teachers support children effectively to identify the 'Laurencekirk Learning Skills' they develop and apply these through play experiences. Teachers have engaged successfully with national guidance and professional development. This has enhanced their understanding of play and helped to ensure that children benefit from quality interactions, spaces, and experiences. Teachers and support staff provide an appropriate balance of adult-directed and child-led activities. They are strengthening their use of observations to plan next steps in children's learning. Teachers respond well to children's interests. As a result, children are becoming increasingly engaged and motivated in learning activities that are relevant and matched well to their interests
- Senior leaders and teachers have recently reviewed the approach to assessment across the school. This is helping teachers plan a range of assessment approaches to check on children's progress more consistently. In most lessons, teachers use regular formative assessment strategies to check for children's understanding. Staff work collaboratively to design high quality assessments that support children to apply their skills and knowledge in unfamiliar contexts. Children who benefit from targeted interventions are assessed regularly to monitor individual progress in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Consequently, teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in using assessment data to inform planning and identify effective next steps for children.
- Most children have regular opportunities to self and peer assess each other's work. This is most notable in writing. This helpful approach is supporting children to reflect actively on their work and identify what they have done well and what steps they need to take to improve further.
- Senior leaders and staff have worked to strengthen professional judgements around achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. Teacher professional judgments are increasingly reliable. They have moderated learning and teaching in writing and aspects of numeracy. They should now build on this positive practice and develop approaches to moderate across other areas of the curriculum both within school and across the cluster. This should further strengthen their professional judgements around children's achievements.
- Teachers work together to plan well across all areas of the curriculum over different timescales. This is leading to greater consistency in approaches to planning learner's experiences. Teachers plan experiences connecting learning across different curricular areas effectively. Children influence planning by offering their thoughts and ideas on what and how

they want to learn. This supports children well to develop as independent learners and helps them build successfully on what they already know.

- All staff track children's progress carefully in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing, using local authority and school developed tracking tools. The headteacher and staff meet termly to discuss the progress, attainment and achievement of individual children, groups and cohorts. Together they identify children who would benefit from additional support and agree approaches to address identified gaps in children's learning. Staff should now track children's progress and skills more robustly across all curricular areas. This should help support teachers to effectively adapt their approaches to teaching and plan effective interventions to improve children's attainment over time.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff use helpful local authority progressive learning pathways to plan children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. These are based on the experiences, outcomes and design principles of CfE. Teachers plan well using long- and medium-term planning approaches. This supports teachers to provide children with a broad general education.
- School staff have built positive partnerships with a broad range of local organisations. Children engage in music, sport, science and health and wellbeing activities that enhance and enrich the curriculum through these partnerships. Staff provide children with opportunities to link curricular learning to the wider world. For example, P7 children have developed their knowledge and skills through working with the Rotary Club to consider how they can help those less fortunate from across the globe. This empowers children and develops their sense of responsibility and achievement.
- All children receive their entitlement to the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 modern languages initiative. Across the school, children learn French which is planned progressively. In addition, children in P5-P7 learn British Sign Language through planned blocks of learning.
- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) each week. They develop skills in team games and learn about the positive impact of sport on their physical and mental wellbeing.
- Children across the school engage well in a range of expressive art activities. A visiting drama specialist supports children to develop and apply important skills, including communication, problem solving and teamwork. A visiting art specialist, along with class teachers support children well to develop an appreciation of art. Children learn about artistic techniques and engage in activities to express themselves and present their ideas through a wide range of media. This develops successfully children's ability to innovate and think creatively.
- School staff provide children with a range of interesting and engaging outdoor learning activities. For example, children develop their literacy and numeracy skills through scavenger hunts looking for clues to build words and solve number problems. They apply their science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) knowledge and skills through exploring changes in the seasons and identifying species of trees. They work together well to develop teamwork and communication skills through den building and use loose parts resources to design, experiment and test out theories. Staff should now build on this positive practice to ensure that children across the school are provided with opportunities to extend and apply their skills through regular and progressive outdoor learning activities.
- Children benefit from a new, well-organised and inviting library that provides a wide variety of texts including books that promote children's understanding of inclusion. They visit the library regularly to select books for pleasure and for research. This supports children well to develop their literacy skills and helps promote children's reading for enjoyment.
- Children receive religious and moral education in line with national guidance. This is supporting children to develop a positive understanding of a range of faiths and cultures.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are kept well informed about the progress their child is making. Most parents feel that staff know their child well as an individual. Senior leaders introduce and evaluate a range of ways in which they engage with parents including, 'Teams teatime takeover', online journals, open afternoons and parents' evenings. Parents enjoy the opportunity to attend these events. The majority of parents agree that they receive regular and helpful feedback about how their child is learning and developing. They value advice provided on how they can support their child's learning further at home.
- Parents are consulted regularly on changes within the school through surveys and 'dotmocracy' voting approaches at parents' evenings. They are aware of the school priorities and how PEF funds are used. Senior leaders and teachers have supported parent volunteers to become reading buddies within the school. These weekly visits are supporting children to improve their reading skills with another trusted adult within the building.
- The Parent Council have taken an active role in fundraising to contribute towards the purchase of digital technology to enhance learners' experiences. They use additional fundraising money to reduce the cost of the school day, including school trips and events. They have also been instrumental in supporting traffic calming measures around the school. Senior leaders should actively encourage increased parental representation on the parent council. This should support further, parent council members to represent the collective views of the wider parent community.

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

very good

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

- Senior leaders and staff promote actively and effectively a culture where everyone understands their responsibility to support children's wellbeing. Children are proud of their school and have a strong sense of belonging to their school community. Staff know all children very well. They use this knowledge effectively to build very positive and nurturing relationships. As a result, almost all children feel that staff encourage them to do their best and almost all children are very well behaved. Across the school children demonstrate well the school values. This leads to supportive and highly respectful relationships with each other and between staff and children. Children are friendly, articulate and well mannered. Almost all children know that if they have any concerns they can speak to a member of staff and are confident that staff will respond sensitively and effectively.
- Children learn regularly about the importance of wellbeing through classroom experiences, assemblies and the enthusiastic work of the Wellbeing Warriors pupil group. As a result, almost all children have a strong understanding of the wellbeing indicators and how these support their learning. They talk confidently about the importance of diet, exercise and managing their emotions. They have a sound understanding of what it means to be active, healthy and safe, including when they are online. All children regularly complete health and wellbeing surveys and webs to evaluate their own wellbeing. Staff respond appropriately and promptly to any concerns raised. Consequently, children are included, feel safe and demonstrate resilience.
- Senior leaders and staff have developed an appropriate anti-bullying policy, in line with updated national guidance. Children learn well about building appropriate and positive relationships with each other through assemblies, curriculum work and an annual anti-bullying week. Senior leaders record allegations, investigations and outcomes in line with local authority and national guidance. A few parents would welcome further clarity on how senior leaders and staff respond positively to concerns. Staff and senior leaders should continue to work with children and parents to help them develop further their understanding of bullying behaviour and what to do if they encounter this.
- Staff have worked together and with the "Wellbeing Warriors" to successfully create and implement guidance on inclusive classrooms. Almost all teachers use consistent approaches to ensure that the learning environment meets the sensory, emotional and accessibility needs of children. This is helping almost all children to feel secure and included within classrooms and shared areas. The Learning Legends pupil group have developed 'Rainbow Drawers' containing a wide range of materials and resources to support children's learning in all

classrooms. All children are encouraged to use these support materials when they face challenges during lessons. This is helping children to become more independent and resilient learners.

- Staff understand and apply the statutory requirements and codes of practice in relation to child protection, wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They have established robust systems, following local authority guidance, to support child protection procedures and keep children safe. Staff have a very good understanding of the range of children's needs within class. Children with barriers to learning are supported well by staff who use the clear and effective strategies outlined in pupil passports. This helps to ensure that almost all children are included and feel safe in lessons. Most parents feel that their child receives the help that they need to do well. Staff have created specific plans in consultation with parents for a few children who require significant additional support with their learning. Support for learning staff and class teachers use a range of creative and engaging approaches to ensure children access the curriculum effectively. Staff use pupil's views well to inform all learning and support plans and to agree helpful targets. The targets in plans are specific, measurable and have clear timescales for review. Consequently, planned interventions are leading to positive improvements in children's learning outcomes, attendance and emotional regulation.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Staff engage very well with a range of partners to meet children's needs. This includes the nature nurture practitioner, pupil wellbeing worker, school counsellor and school nurse who deliver a range of interventions for individual and groups of identified children. This is helping a few children to improve their attendance and better understand and manage their emotions. Educational Psychological Services provide helpful professional learning and advice for staff and supportive interventions for children. This helps staff to develop effectively their understanding of nurturing approaches and to plan learning that meets the needs of children who require additional support.
- PSAs provide highly effective support for individual and groups of children. They lead impactful interventions to support the development of literacy, numeracy and social and emotional skills for identified children. They work closely with senior leaders and class teachers to monitor the progress of these children. Almost all children are making progress towards their planned targets as a result of these interventions. This includes a few children improving their attendance and reducing anxiety by benefitting from supported soft starts to the school day or on return from lunchtime.
- School and nursery staff have established a highly effective nursery to P1 transition programme. Teachers and support staff engage in planned visits to the nursery in the school, with nursery staff supporting children well for the first month of P1. This develops positive relationships with children and families. The highly effective partnership with the local high school supports the carefully planned transition programme in place for all P7 children.

Children particularly value the work of the S3 paired readers who provide support and advice throughout transition. This helps almost all children to feel confident and resilient in their new school. Children who require additional support for their learning or wellbeing benefit from carefully considered enhanced transition arrangements. This builds children's confidence and helps them settle quickly and well in their new school.

- Children experience learning which is linked clearly to the wellbeing indicators and children's rights. Almost all children feel that the school teaches them how to lead a healthy lifestyle and supports them to engage in regular exercise. This includes PE lessons, outdoor learning and sporting experiences outwith the school. Children are enthusiastic about the activities on offer. They are developing well their physical and teamworking skills and developing resilience.
- Children enhance their knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and multi-faith issues during assemblies and in a range of curriculum areas. They are developing an increased understanding of their rights through their focus on the rights of the child in assemblies and lessons. They are proud of being awarded national accreditation for their work relating to children's rights. Senior staff should continue to develop how children learn about their rights, equalities, diversity and protected characteristics across the curriculum. This should support children to strengthen further their understanding of their place in the world as global citizens.

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 English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children across the school achieve expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. A minority of children are capable of making accelerated progress and require further challenge in their learning.
- Children who require additional support with their learning make good progress against their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children use body language well to show they are listening to each other, make appropriate eye contact and respond well to questions being asked. They should be supported to develop their ability to communicate and share stories in different ways through imaginative play. At first level, most children are articulate and listen and respond to each other respectfully. They are not yet confident in distinguishing between fact and opinion. At second level, most children articulately express their opinion and appropriately respond to questions asked. They would benefit from listening to each other more carefully and engage in effective turn taking in extended discussions.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children use their understanding of sounds and letters to read simple words confidently. They describe well stories and characters from illustrations. They should be supported to develop their understanding of features of simple fiction and non-fiction texts. At first level, most children read confidently with fluency and expression. At second level, most children use texts well to gather information as part of research. Across first and second level children would benefit from developing their skills in identifying emotive language used in texts to engage the reader.

Writing

- At early level, almost all children confidently identify and form capital and lowercase letters. Teachers should support children to enhance their presentation of writing and spelling basic words with improved accuracy. At first level, the majority of children write sentences

accurately, with appropriate punctuation and conjunctions. At second level, most children use language effectively to convey an image, influence or persuade the reader. Children at all levels should be challenged further to write more extended pieces of writing across a range of genres and for different audiences.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children count accurately to 20 and beyond. They order numbers and identify missing numbers in number sequences within 20. Children should develop further their ability to use correct mathematical language in measurement. At first level, most children round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They tell the time accurately using analogue clocks. They are not yet confident in managing simple budgets. At second level, most children apply knowledge of rounding to give an accurate estimate. They understand how to express fractions in their simplest form. Teachers should support children to develop further their skills in money calculations, including calculating profit and loss accurately.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and describe common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They are developing their understanding of positional language. At first level, most children use the correct mathematical language to describe the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. They find right angles successfully in the environment. They would benefit from consolidating their skills in identifying symmetry in patterns and pictures. At second level most children identify accurately a range of angles, including acute, obtuse and reflex. They are not yet confident in using positional language to provide accurate directions.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children collect and organise a range of objects successfully using simple criteria. They should continue to develop their skills in answering questions about information presented in simple tables. At first level, most children extract key information from bar graphs. At second level, most children analyse and interpret data accurately to draw conclusions. At first and second level, children would benefit from enhanced opportunities to use digital technology to collect, organise and display data.

Attainment over time

- Attendance across the school in 2024/25 was 95%. This was above the national average and was an increase from 2023/24. Senior leaders monitor closely the attendance of all children. They use appropriate interventions and follow local authority guidance to support individual children to improve their attendance. These strategies and the nurturing ethos and environments across the school motivates children to want to attend school. A few children access school on a part time basis. These part-time timetables are reviewed regularly with families. As a result, children are increasing their time in school.
- Senior leaders have developed effective tracking systems to monitor the progress children make as they progress through CfE levels across the school. Senior leaders have accurately identified that children's attainment dips at first level and now need to increase the pace and challenge of children's learning at this stage. They have also identified the need to improve

aspects of literacy and numeracy at first and second level. Teachers now employ well considered universal and targeted interventions to support improvements in attainment within reading, writing and numeracy. Children make good progress from their prior levels in learning as a result of these interventions. By P7 most children achieve nationally expected standards in literacy and numeracy.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff work very well with children to develop a strong culture of achievement. Senior leaders celebrate children's achievements both in and outwith the school in a variety of ways. This includes through an online platform, at assemblies and through the school's achievement board. Children, families and staff highlight the 'Laurencekirk Learning Skills' that children develop through engaging in these activities. This supports well children to be successful learners, confident individuals and effective contributors.
- Children make an effective and authentic contribution to the wider school community where they develop their skills as effective contributors and responsible citizens. This includes contributing positively to school improvement and the wider school community. For example, children visit the local care home and support helpfully the work of the local foodbank. A minority of children plan and lead an extensive range of school clubs and activities. This supports children to have a positive impact on change within the school and helps all children to develop and thrive.
- Senior leaders and staff plan and deliver a range of well-considered and effective activities for children to achieve. This includes working with partners to deliver first aid training to all children in P6 and P7. Senior leaders have over time developed an effective system to track children's participation in activities and achievements both within and outwith school. Staff analyse this information effectively to identify children at risk of missing out, including those who face additional barriers to achievement. Consequently, children are supported effectively to participate in interesting and engaging activities to develop further their skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a strong understanding of the socio-economic context of the school community and beyond. Senior leaders plan well their use of PEF to support targeted interventions to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy. Children's progress through these interventions is carefully tracked and senior leaders review the progress of targeted cohorts of children. Overall, most children are making positive progress within targeted interventions and gaps in children's learning and attainment are closing.
- Staff work well with the community to effectively reduce the cost of the school day. They work with the Parent Council who conduct fundraising to provide activities and experiences for all children with limited or no cost to families. Staff in the school have established a positive partnership with the local charity shop where children and families can access recycled school uniform. This ensures that all children have opportunities to engage fully in the life and work of the school.

Context

The Enhanced Provision within Laurencekirk Primary School is known as the Beehive. The provision supports children from P3 to P7 with a wide and complex range of additional support needs. Children from the Mearns Academy cluster in Aberdeenshire are referred to the provision through the local Additional Support Needs Forum. At the time of inspection, the roll is eight children in one class. There is one teacher and two pupil support assistants. The headteacher provides leadership and operational management for the Beehive. Children attend most of their lessons within the Beehive. They also access lessons as appropriate within their mainstream class.

Leadership of change

- Staff work very well with children to uphold the school's vision, values and aims. They build warm, nurturing and respectful relationships which create a positive and productive learning environment and support children to show care and respect for one another. Staff help children to apply the values of resilience and responsibility well by ensuring that learning is consistently prioritised within the classroom. Staff have an encouraging and supportive approach, which enables children to persevere with learning, even when tasks are challenging. As a result, children experience a strong sense of achievement and make consistently good progress in their learning. Whole-school assemblies play an important role in supporting ongoing reflection on respectful and responsible behaviour. Staff ensure that children understand the importance of making positive choices, helping others and taking responsibility for classroom roles and routines. As a result, children are developing a growing understanding of contributing positively to the life of the school.
- The headteacher works effectively with staff to implement a range of improvements within the Beehive. For example, they have begun to review approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring to ensure these more closely reflect children's individual needs and abilities. The headteacher is beginning to strengthen arrangements for quality assurance within the Beehive. This is supporting the identification and recording of priorities for improvement and helping to bring greater clarity and consistency to staff's practice. Senior leaders arrange and chair multi-agency child action plan meetings for each child within the Beehive. These meetings provide an effective platform for parents to engage directly with senior leaders and relevant partner agencies. As a result, planning for children's wellbeing and learning is becoming more coordinated and responsive. Senior leaders should ensure that they continue to prioritise a strategic approach to quality assurance and improvement planning within the Beehive.
- The headteacher and class teacher meet for planning and attainment review meetings. They use these meetings to discuss how well children's needs are met. Together they ascertain anything further which children or staff may need to accelerate children's progress. They identify what is working well with regard to planning and make changes to help support children.
- Staff have recently developed links with similar schools across the authority. This is supporting them to participate in moderation activities. Senior leaders should continue to encourage staff to expand their professional networks and share good practice.

- Staff have also recently re-designed the classroom layout to achieve an environment suitable for continuous learning through play. Staff sourced funding to support the purchase of furniture and equipment to creatively enhance the environment. This is now an effective area where children can play, learn, explore practice social play, and refine their fine and gross motor skills effectively.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- All staff know the children in the Beehive very well. They have built positive nurturing relationships with all children. Staff plan children's learning activities carefully to include a balance of time in the Beehive and in mainstream classes to suit each child's individual needs. This supports children to feel included in school life and build friendships across the school. As a result, children are settled and engage well in learning and activities most of the time. Almost all children behave well.
- Staff provide a welcoming and inviting environment in the Beehive. Children engage in purposeful play, independent tasks, well-planned literacy and numeracy activities and regular outdoor learning. They benefit from clear routines and expectations from all staff. Staff and children start the day by sharing the visible timetable and discussing the activities planned. This is helping children to feel safe and secure.
- Staff ensure children are learning at the right level of difficulty, with appropriate support and challenge. Children have access to a range of resources to help them engage well with learning. They use digital devices well to assist communication and, for example, ear defenders or sloping desks to reduce barriers to learning. Staff use a range of questions and prompts effectively to include children in learning. They link new concepts to prior learning and children's interests. Children have opportunities to make choices during the day, for example, as they plant seeds and play in the 'imagination station'. They learn in small groups supported very well by staff and work independently for short periods of time. Staff skilfully ensure children's learning and wellbeing needs are well met.
- Staff recently introduced new approaches to planning children's learning using local authority planning tools. Teachers in the Beehive and mainstream classes collaborate meaningfully to ensure children experience learning across the breadth of the curriculum. They use observations, children's work and an online journal to record children's learning and to plan appropriate next steps. Staff are beginning to assess and track children's learning more closely using milestones and benchmarks. Staff should continue to monitor regularly the progress children are making. This should help them to evidence more clearly the good progress individual children make.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Staff design the curriculum with an emphasis on wellbeing. Children learn how to be safe, healthy and active. They understand who to speak to if they feel upset or worried. Staff use wellbeing webs effectively to help children gain an appropriate understanding of their own wellbeing needs. Children participate confidently in practical wellbeing activities such as handwashing, preparing healthy snacks and cutting fruit. With well-judged staff support, children try new experiences and increase the range and variety of foods they eat, supporting their health in practical and meaningful ways.

- Staff meet statutory requirements appropriately. All children have Individual Education Plans that clearly identify their high-level needs and set out medium- and long-term targets. These plans link learning closely with children's social, emotional and health needs and support a holistic approach to provision. Staff work with a range of partners to access valuable support for children and families. Amongst others, children benefit from input from educational psychologists, occupational therapists and a teacher of the deaf. The wide range of partners support children well to overcome barriers to learning.
- Inclusion and equality are strong features of the Beehive. Staff who know children well provide high-quality support for learning. The Beehive teacher and mainstream class teachers work closely together to plan learning that meets children's needs. This includes meeting children's communication needs through signing and the use of symbols. Each child has a pupil passport, which outlines their needs including personal care, dietary, communication, sensory and learning needs. These provide clear guidance for staff and support consistent approaches across the school. Children also take part in planned experiences such as cycling, road safety, first aid, bowling and transition activities, which further support wellbeing and inclusion.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Most children make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Children work across the pre-early level milestones and within early and first levels in literacy, numeracy and other curriculum areas.
- Children's attainment over time is good. They make positive progress across the curriculum both within the Beehive and through their inclusion in selected lessons with their mainstream peers. Staff should continue to closely monitor children's progress across the curriculum to inform how children can increase their learning with mainstream peers.
- Children make considerable progress in their social development and with their emotional regulation. Children build friendships within the Beehive and across the wider school. They participate well in a variety of wider achievement activities including sports, dance, and intergenerational activities at the local care home. They sustain their engagement during group learning activities and express their needs increasingly well through speech, signing and pictorial symbols. This represents significant achievement for all children within the Beehive. Staff should continue to ensure that all children benefit from leadership roles across the school.
- Most children attending the Beehive have attendance above the national average. A few children struggle to attend consistently. Where this is the case, senior leaders and staff keep in regular contact with families to offer support and to encourage more positive patterns of attendance. They should continue the positive work in this area to ensure all children attend consistently.
- Most children experience increased equity from attending the Beehive. Children access learning in small groups, have increased support from dedicated staff and benefit from careful planning and attention to their needs.

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.