

Summarised inspection findings

New Lanark Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

21 January 2025

Key contextual information

New Lanark Primary School is a small school which serves the communities of New Lanark, Braxfield and Bankhead. There are two multi-composite classes, P1-3 and P4-7. There is an additional spare classroom used as a general purpose room. New Lanark Primary School has an outdoor space with a variety of surfaces including a trim trail, and an all-weather pitch. There is a garden area maintained by children and staff which produces food for the school and community.

The headteacher has responsibility for a partner school which is also part of the New Lanark Learning Community. She is ably supported by a principal teacher who has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school when the headteacher is at the partner school. Children attend several local early learning and childcare settings. There have been staffing changes and challenges in recent years.

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 headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths across the school, as well as specific areas that need further development. She is aspirational for all children and is effectively developing a whole school collaborative approach to leadership at all levels. Senior leaders work very well together, and their skills complement each other well. Together, they provide strong, well-judged leadership and direction and manage the pace of change well.
- Staff have developed an inclusive, nurturing and caring ethos across all parts of the school community. The ethos clearly reflects the recently revised school values of honesty, achievement, happiness, fun and learning. All staff embody the values through everyday actions which underpin the school's culture, ethos and language. Children are aware of and talk confidently about the school values. Parents and carers are involved in the decision to include possible additional values of team work, respect and care. This ensures meaningful involvement, a deeper understanding of the values and supports parental engagement. Staff and children co-create class charters. This is supporting the delivery of children's rights in all areas of life in the school very well. As planned, the creation of a playground charter will develop further children's awareness of rights in all areas of life in the school.
- All children enjoy meaningful leadership roles in pupil leadership committees. These roles include Reading Ambassadors, an Eco Gardening Club, Learning and Community Ambassadors and Junior Road Safety Officers. All committees have action plans that are developed by the children with staff and are regularly monitored and reported upon. This supports children to develop greater awareness of themselves as learners, broadens their curriculum experience and improves attainment in reading. Older children have the opportunity to become house captains and vice-captains with children across the school choosing their preferred candidates. This improves the ethos of the school environment as children feel

involved in decisions which affect them. Staff encourage children to take joint responsibility for their school environment and lead positive change through their involvement with participatory budgeting. They develop their awareness of money, budgets and the cost of living.

- The headteacher has provided effective leadership, coaching and mentoring to staff. As a result, staff are empowered to lead change. All staff have leadership roles which are linked to the school improvement plan. These include leading on literacy, play and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. This results in a broader range of curriculum experiences for children, higher levels of engagement and use of technology to enhance learning. There is a need to outline responsibilities linked to the various leadership and management roles and how they influence school improvement. This will ensure greater understanding of how staff contribute to improvement priorities. The improvement plan should include specific and measurable targets that more directly outline staff's leadership roles and how they will action key priorities.
- Senior leaders and staff encourage feedback from families at stakeholder engagement activities including parents' consultation evenings. Senior leaders should continue their efforts to involve all stakeholders in evaluating the work of the school and agreeing future priorities. Most parents are not aware of school improvement priorities. The planned formation of a parent council should prioritise opportunities for the staff to consult and include all parents in improvement planning.
- Children are involved in purposeful self-evaluation activities including contributing their views to key aspirational questions. The Learning and Community ambassadors ensure parents' and children's voice is included in decisions that affect them. For example, asking children and parents for PEF funding suggestions and contributing to school improvement priorities. They plan to work with children from other schools to develop further skills learned through the Young Leaders of Learning training.
- All staff demonstrate a very effective, collaborative approach to continuous improvement. They are keen to learn from colleagues within the school, the Lanark Learning Community, local authority colleagues and national organisations. For example, developing play across the school. This ensures staff continue to refine and improve their practice. Senior leaders and staff regularly evaluate the impact of improvement work using How good is our school? 4th edition (HGIOS4) quality indicators. They discuss progress and impact of priorities and identify appropriate next steps. The school improvement plan reflects a clear strategic direction and includes ambitious targets and relevant priorities. These are linked to a diary of collegiate activities and a quality assurance calendar.
- Senior leaders monitor the work of the school well through implementation of a cycle of quality assurance. They sample the work of children, review planning folders and visit classes to observe children's experiences. This is at the early stages of evaluating the quality and impact of children's learning experiences. The headteacher provides summarised feedback from monitoring activities. This feedback is linked to quality indicators and identifies elements of good practice and next steps. Senior leaders now need to ensure all staff are included in quality assurance activities. The staff team are well placed to continue to share best practice and professional learning. Teacher's partnership school peer observations could be developed further to share the wide variety of skills and knowledge within the staff team.

- Senior leaders are at the early stages of embedding a robust annual professional review calendar. It will be important that this process involves all staff, links to national standards, codes of practice and the current school improvement plan. This will support other self-evaluation activities to inform next steps for improvement and the pace of change to improve outcomes for all children.

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 and staff work well together to create nurturing learning environments for all children. Children are friendly, polite and respectful in their interactions with their peers, school staff and visitors. Across the school, children and staff have positive, warm and supportive relationships which reflect the school values. Senior leaders and staff support children very well to regulate behaviour. They are aware of the impact this may have on peers and strive to minimise and mitigate this impact through effective strategies and adherence to local and national guidance.
- Staff know children well as individuals and are aware of their wellbeing needs. They are highly motivated to expand their professional knowledge and have a strong team approach to improve learning opportunities for children and families. In most lessons, teachers' explanations and expectations of children's behaviour and interactions with each other are clear. All teachers share effectively what children will learn and increasingly how children will know they have been successful in their learning. As planned, children would know themselves better as learners with further opportunities to personalise and co-create how they know if they have been successful.
- School support staff work very effectively with teachers to deliver strategies and interventions for children who require support with their learning. Individual plans are in place for those children who experience barriers to learning or have additional learning needs. Senior leaders evaluate the impact of these interventions effectively and monitor children's progress.
- Most children engage well during lessons. They are motivated and sustain engagement for longer when learning is linked to real and meaningful contexts. Children across all stages experience a blend of whole class lessons and opportunities to work in groups, pairs and independently. They enjoy learning and feel comfortable approaching staff with questions and suggestions. Staff value children's ideas and encourage contributions in a supportive, shared learning environment. In most lessons formative assessment strategies are used well to provide children with feedback and check for understanding and engagement. This includes written and verbal feedback to help children improve their work and identify and understand their next steps in learning. Older children use self-assessment and increasingly peer assessment. These approaches are supporting children well to know themselves better as learners.
- Teachers are beginning to use play to support learning and teaching approaches for the youngest children. They develop the environment with children to support skills including creativity, problem solving, teamwork, thinking and imagination. They use national guidance and local authority professional learning to develop their understanding of high-quality play pedagogy. Teachers plan to identify effective practice in other schools. This will ensure that

play is planned and evaluated more effectively to provide challenge and continuity in all areas of learning.

- Staff make effective use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to share learning and enrich children's learning experiences. Older children access resources, explanations of work and consolidate their learning using an online classroom platform and matrix bar codes. For example, they use explanatory video clips and games to support their knowledge and understanding across a variety of curricular areas. Almost all older children can log onto devices independently, access digital programmes and complete individualised learning. Children can clearly identify how digital technologies make a difference to their learning. Staff effectively use assistive technologies to support learners who experience barriers to their learning.
- The headteacher has correctly identified the need for improved consistency in the use of assessments. The recently introduced assessment calendar supports teachers' confidence in their use of a range of assessments and data. This is at the early stages of improving professional judgements and the reliability and quantity of data to accurately show children's attainment over time. Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment data to support their professional judgements about the progress children are making in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers participation in learning community moderation is also improving the accuracy of professional judgements about children's attainment. Teachers are embedding the use of learning conversations with children to enable them to reflect upon what they have been learning and their next steps. Teachers use of the national Benchmarks for an increasing range of curricular areas is developing their understanding of national standards. This enables them to assess more accurately children's progress and attainment. Teachers should continue to develop their use and application of assessment data to contribute to improve further the accuracy of professional judgements that inform the planning, tracking and assessment cycle.
- Senior leaders meet teachers for termly 'forward planning' meetings to discuss and record children's progress, achievement and attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders and teachers have benefitted from professional learning and support to analyse data and identify trends and patterns using data from the previous two sessions. This analysis identifies different children who experience barriers to learning, have below average attendance rates, gaps in their learning or additional learning needs. This supports teachers to plan effective learning and strategies for all children.
- Senior leaders and teachers are developing further an agreed and consistent approach to plan progressively across all year groups. They use overview plans for the year which identify key themes, local celebrations, religious festivals, and national themed weeks. This includes, for example, Black History month and world of work week. Teachers plan learning which makes links across the curriculum. Next steps could include the teaching of discrete skills which they can then demonstrate in relevant and new contexts. Staff plans to revise and include more community links, outdoor learning, skills and children's rights in planning documentation will support the tracking of children's experiences further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use local authority progression learning pathways well in numeracy and mathematics to plan for children's learning. Teachers currently use a range of progression pathways and resources for all curricular areas for their classes. Senior leaders and staff plan to develop the consistent use of progression pathways for all curricular areas to ensure all planned experiences build on children's prior learning.
- All children experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week. This includes a block of swimming for older children. There are regular opportunities for children to participate in sports opportunities with external coaches.
- Across the school children are learning French in a progressive way which builds on prior learning. They have a Scots language focus week in January every year to link with Burns night. Senior leaders should prioritise the identification and implementation of a second language to provide children with their entitlement to 1+2 modern languages.
- All children regularly access the school library to select books to read for enjoyment. This is having a positive impact on children's attainment in reading. Reading Ambassadors support this work and are aware of the importance of reading to support other curricular areas.
- Children benefit from planned programmes to support them as they move from a variety of early learning and childcare settings to P1 and from P7 to S1. Senior leaders are aware of the importance of sharing key information at points of transition within the school to help all children make the best possible progress.
- Staff, children and parents contribute ideas to the new curriculum rationale. It aims to reflect the unique context of the school and inspire children and families to maximise children's potential. This should develop further children's understanding of the local historical, social and environmental context and the wider world that they live in.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders provide families with helpful updates on the life of the school through regular newsletters and the recently updated school website. Showcase events are popular and support children to share learning in a range of curricular areas. Staff provide annual written reports about children's progress and bi-annual parents' consultation evenings. Parents and carers feel confident to approach their child's teacher for information if required. Staff are visible at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents would find it helpful if there was more regular communication from the school, in particular, incidents linked to their child's wellbeing.
- The headteacher asks parents regularly for their views about the work of the school. Parents, family members and carers are enthusiastic supporters of fundraising and parental engagement activities. Senior leaders understand the importance of reinstating the Parent Council. They recognise the value of working with parents to consult and develop school improvement priorities, policies and the sharing of key information.

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

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

- All staff prioritise children's health and wellbeing which is viewed as an essential factor in successful learning. As a result, most children feel safe and secure and are confident to speak to an adult if they need support. They are treated in a fair and just manner. All children benefit from the range of activities to promote physical and mental wellbeing. This includes emotion check-ins, class charters and the developing inclusion of children's rights. Most children are increasingly aware and use the language of children's rights in their everyday discussions and learning. Staff focus on a children's right at weekly assemblies alongside recognition of modelling positive behaviour in the playground. As a result, children are aware of children's rights and most children make safe and effective choices about their mental health.
- All children have a voice in the school, with their decisions making a difference and their impact being detailed in action plans. For example, children visited the local library and gathered ideas from the librarian about World Book Day events. They are involved in the current review and creation of the curriculum rationale. Staff asked and took into account their views and ideas on the uniqueness of their school. Children effectively shared their views on what works well, what could be better, and where they would like to see the school in the future. As a result, most children develop their leadership, team working, cooperation, communication and decision-making skills very well. They have a strong sense of feeling that their views are taken into account and feel respected and included in the life of the school.
- Staff incorporate the language of wellbeing into experiences throughout the day. Senior leaders and teachers can evidence the progress all children are making in their wellbeing and ability to regulate their emotions. As planned, the continued use of a wellbeing survey will ensure staff develop further the established tracking of children's views on wellbeing across the school. Children are not yet making consistent, meaningful and regular use of the wellbeing indicators.
- Children take part enthusiastically in an extensive range of planned physical education and physical activity. These include swimming lessons, participation in a football festival and a daily social walking or running activity. Most children are confident with ball skills, balancing and climbing. They enjoy exploring and using the trim trail during break times. Most children understand and manage risk well. They climb, jump and negotiate a range of outdoor spaces very well.
- Most children are making good progress with their skills in turn taking, problem solving and sharing ideas through the variety of learning and teaching approaches in the classrooms. Most feel well supported to do their best. Children have an appreciation of nature, knowledge of how things grow and a sense of wonder for the natural world. Staff's re-introduction of a forest club to explore a piece of local woodland and the nearby grounds and footpaths will develop these areas of knowledge and skills further. As planned, the agreement of a vision for outdoor learning will develop further outdoor learning experiences and the engagement and motivation

for learning for all children. The majority of children are developing their awareness of current global issues including climate change and justice. This is an area that could be included in revised approaches to outdoor learning and awareness of the wider world.

- 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. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Children benefit from having access to fruit as a healthy snack provided by the school. Children are not confident in naming the key food groups. They need to develop further their understanding and awareness of healthy foods, a balanced diet and the effects of food groups on the body. Staff should prioritise the development of a progressive programme for food and health which builds upon children's positive experiences of practical food skills, cookery and gardening.
- Staff undertake appropriate professional learning to ensure they are kept up to date with information relevant to children requiring additional support. The headteacher and staff ensure that this training leads to measurable improvements in children's wellbeing. They reflect on children's changing needs and plan, participate and use training to meet their health and wellbeing requirements very well.
- All staff are aware of their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and keeping children safe. All staff have completed training in line with their responsibilities and codes of practice. They know their children and families very well, including those who may require additional support. The headteacher and staff use the local authority staged intervention approaches effectively to assess and support children. The headteacher and class teachers track the progress and attainment of children with additional support needs well. Individualised plans support children well, with appropriate personal targets in place to meet their individual needs. Senior leaders provide targeted interventions to identify cohorts of learners to raise attainment. These include children who have barriers to learning. Staff track their progress carefully to ensure the interventions are having an impact. Children's, parents' and carers' views are not consistently included in children's individual plans. Senior leaders acknowledge this is an area that requires improvement and will support better collaboration and outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders identify social and unstructured times are periods where children's behaviour can become dysregulated. Staff and children have made changes to learning environments across the school such as designated calm areas and regulation stations. Children are now able to make choices about when to access these spaces to support them to manage their emotions. This approach is helping children well to recognise the events that impact on their emotions and behaviours and to develop strategies that support them. Staff very effectively apply training in intervention and de-escalation techniques to support regulation of behaviour.
- The headteacher regularly monitors attendance and early action is taken to prevent non-attendance becoming a barrier to learning. Most children's attendance is high, and overall attendance is above the national average. Staff plan to share information and the impact of attendance and lateness on children's education at an upcoming parents' evening. There have been no exclusions in the past two academic sessions.
- Most children are supportive of each other. The headteacher is a strong advocate for children and families who are facing challenging circumstances. All staff support this approach and are

extremely aware of the impact barriers to learning have on the progress of children's learning. Senior leaders and staff should continue to include all children in all aspects of school life. Parents and carers would benefit from information being shared about current national approaches to inclusion, anti-bullying and positive relationships. The inclusion of parents in the review of the relationships policy would be a positive start. Senior leaders promote equal opportunities in all aspects of school life. This includes working effectively with partners, parents and carers. Senior leaders and staff should continue work to develop policies to ensure a shared understanding and commitment to understanding, valuing and celebrating diversity, wellbeing, attachment and trauma informed practice.

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

- Due to small numbers on the school roll and the risk of identifying individual children, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups and levels.
- Overall, most children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing, talking and listening and numeracy. Most children who require support with learning make good progress towards their targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children make good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Most children listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. A minority of children need support to engage and sustain their focus in learning experiences. Most children talk confidently about their experiences with adults and each other. They are supported well to build on the opinions and views of others during group work. Older children would benefit from identifying the main ideas of spoken texts and using the information gathered for a specific purpose.

Reading

- Younger children recognise initial sounds. The majority of children read familiar texts with increasing fluency and expression. They can summarise the main ideas from a text but are less confident in answering inferential and evaluative questions about familiar texts. Older children enjoy a variety of books and make regular use of an increasingly well-stocked school library. They can talk about favourite authors and types of texts and give explanations about why they enjoy them. Older children would benefit from developing their ability to identify techniques that authors use to engage readers, for example, word choice and emotive language.

Writing

- Younger children are developing their knowledge of lowercase and uppercase letters. The majority can form letters legibly and write simple sentences to convey meaning. Staff should continue to encourage children to mark-make during play and real life experiences. Older children write in a range of genres. Most children write independently and punctuate most sentences accurately. This includes weekly recounts, writing to persuade and recipe instructions used in a practical cooking session. Most children understand the specific features of different genres and how they are used in real life contexts. They are developing their use

of similes and adjectives in appropriate contexts. Children would benefit from more opportunities to write at length.

Numeracy and mathematics

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

Number, money and measure

- The youngest children count forward and confidently recognise numbers to 10. They order numbers to five and are developing their ordering of numbers beyond five. Young children are beginning to use addition and subtraction to 10 using different strategies. They are confident with place value and understanding and using two, three and four digit numbers. Older children round numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000. Older children are increasingly confident with mental calculations and strategies linked to place value, money and measurements. Most older children are less confident with fractions, decimals and percentages. They would benefit from consolidation in recording a fraction and understanding mathematical terminology of fractions. Across all stages, children need to continue their application of knowledge, processes and strategies in real life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children recognise and describe common two-dimensional shapes. Children are aware of symmetry and create a range of symmetrical pictures. They are beginning to use positional language but could develop further their knowledge using construction and block play. Children are developing their ability to name and describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. Older children describe properties of two-dimensional shapes and can use them to complete tiling challenges and tangrams. Older children confidently calculate radius and diameters of circles. Children need to develop further their knowledge and drawing of angles.

Information handling

- Across all stages children need increased opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in using a range of information. Children need greater experience of how data can be recorded, including the use and interpretation of data using digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and numeracy over time. Senior leaders and staff have implemented processes and systems to record and track children's attainment over time. They use this data to look for patterns in attainment and identify individuals and groups for targeted interventions, including those with barriers to learning. Senior leaders now have a clearer evidence base which better illustrates how staff are accelerating children's progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children value and are proud of their achievements which staff celebrate in a variety of ways in school. They have regular opportunities to apply their leadership and organisational skills by being reading ambassadors and learning and community ambassadors. Older children improve their teamwork, confidence and organisational skills through their leadership roles in the house system.
- All children have opportunities to attend and develop further their skills through a variety of extra-curricular lunchtime clubs such as a Reading Club, a Forest Club and an Eco Gardening Club. These experiences are developing children's teamwork, leadership, creativity and skills for life. The school has attained national awards for gardening, emotional understanding and awareness, STEM and reading.

- Senior leaders and staff are at the early stages of linking achievements to skills for learning, life and work. They should develop systems to record and help identify any children who are at risk of missing out on opportunities. This will also highlight the importance of activities undertaken outside of school and inform parents and carers about their role in their children's overall education.

Equity for all learners

- All staff understand the context of the school and the barriers to learning faced by children and families, including socio-economic disadvantage. Staff take effective action to address the cost of the school day. This ensures family circumstances are not a barrier to children's access, participation, and inclusion.
- The headteacher carefully tracks the progress and attainment of learners who may be affected by socio-economic disadvantage. Senior leaders have identified gaps in attainment and new systems and records are evidencing this gap is beginning to close. They use this data to prioritise Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and provide staff to deliver a range of effective interventions. Staff implement a range of universal and targeted interventions to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. This supports children who are not making expected levels of progress or who have barriers to their learning. Senior leaders and staff consult with children, parents and carers about PEF through the process of participatory budgeting. They feel that their views matter and they can influence decisions in school that affect them.
- Staff are aware of the impact of the cost of the school day and use local authority guidance to inform and develop their knowledge and approaches. Senior leaders and staff work effectively with children to engage families and seek their views on the impact of the cost of the school day. Staff consider carefully the cost of activities and source funding to reduce financial demands on families.

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.