

Summarised inspection findings

Gargunnock Primary School

Stirling Council

4 November 2025

Key contextual information

Gargunnock Primary School is a non-denominational primary school serving the rural community of Gargunnock and its surrounding area. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 72 pupils organised across four classes. Almost all children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 8. Fourteen percent of children require additional support with their learning and 8% are entitled to free school meals. The headteacher has been in post since 2021.

1.3 Leadership of change

very 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 effective headteacher works collaboratively with the school community to create a calm, nurturing and aspirational learning environment. The school aims are to develop learners who achieve success, display confidence, leadership and contribute effectively to their communities. These are being achieved very successfully. Children are confident, happy and enthusiastic about learning. They display a very strong regard and respect for each other and the adults who educate and care for them.
- In recent years, the headteacher led a review of the curriculum rationale. The curriculum now reflects the unique context of the school and supports teachers to incorporate a wide variety of opportunities to work with and within the community. For example, children work with local beekeepers to learn about pollination and the importance of sustainability. Staff and children speak enthusiastically about the wide variety and motivating contexts for learning. This is helping children to enjoy their learning and is contributing to very high levels of engagement.
- Last session, all members of the school community were involved in reviewing and refreshing the school values. Following consultation, three of the school values were affirmed and three amended to reflect the current context of the school. All children and staff model well the school values of creativity, honesty, kindness, respect, responsibility and teamwork.
- The headteacher and staff demonstrate a very good understanding of the social, economic and community context of the school. This is underpinned by strong relationships and very effective teamwork. Children volunteer enthusiastically to take on areas of responsibility as 'buddies', gardeners, librarians and digital leaders. Staff feel supported to take a lead on areas of interest, for example in relation to digital learning. Parents feel encouraged to share their talents and interests, for example contributing to 'skills academy' lessons. Members of the local community volunteer their time to take part in events and celebrations. Collectively this provides children with rich contexts for learning and helps them make a strong connection with the local community.
- The headteacher has a very strong understanding of the needs of the school and she manages the pace of change and improvement very well. She uses a wide range of qualitative and

quantitative data very effectively as part of self-evaluation activities and seeks the opinions of staff, parents and children to identify areas for improvement. The headteacher consults with staff to carefully consider how best to take forward priorities to ensure that change is manageable and sustainable.

- Across the school, children make a very effective contribution to the life and the work of the school. They benefit from a wide range of opportunities to influence change and improvement. Children hold leadership roles as house, vice captains and pupil council members. Children's views and ideas have influenced changes to arrangements at lunchtime and choices for resources in the playground and school library. They take an active role in supporting school assemblies, for example playing piano.
- The headteacher uses a quality assurance calendar effectively to monitor the work of the school, for example observing learning and teaching and reviewing teachers' planning. The headteacher also works with headteachers of local schools to enhance quality assurance activities. She uses data gathered from these activities very well to identify clear next steps for improvement across the school. For example, having identified common areas for improvement in teaching, last session the headteacher worked with staff to agree a model for an 'excellent lesson'. The headteacher has also worked with staff to agree consistent approaches to planning and assessment of learning.
- Teachers engage in annual professional review and development meetings with the headteacher. Together, they reflect on progress made towards targets from the previous year and link new targets to the General Teaching Council for Scotland professional standards and school improvement priorities. This session all teachers have identified leadership roles linked to either an area of school improvement or personal interest. The headteacher has put in place a collegiate calendar which supports teachers well to progress leadership responsibilities while managing workload well. A few teachers are engaged in professional enquiry projects, for example in relation to numeracy, which is supporting changes in practice across the school.
- The headteacher ensures staff have protected time for professional learning and staff use this time effectively to develop their practice. For example, staff have engaged in valuable professional learning relating to developing inclusive learning environments and high-quality assessments. As planned, the headteacher should now work closely with staff to further develop learning through play.
- The Parent Council supports a range of events and are consulted, for example, in relation to the school improvement plan. Going forward, the headteacher should continue to involve the Parent Council and children in strategic decision making, for example in relation to spending of Pupil Equity Funding.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Led very well by the headteacher, all staff have created a welcoming, nurturing and inclusive learning environment. The culture and ethos of the school is underpinned by their vision 'Be good, be kind, improve your mind'. Staff know and care for children as individuals and as learners. Staff have appropriately high expectations which supports children well to reach high standards of work and behaviour. Children are proud of their school and very supportive of each other. They demonstrate this through their positive attitudes and respectful interactions.
- Staff provide rich and interesting learning experiences for children. They make very effective use of the local environment to provide motivating real-life contexts for learning across the curriculum. For example, children worked with an environmental group to breed trout, learning about water quality, habitat, and conservation before releasing the young fish into a local river. Staff also involve parents and partners in enhancing learning experiences. For example, as part of their Mandarin and cultural studies, children learned how to make Chinese dumplings. These interesting contexts for learning, which are well matched to children's needs, support children's behaviour and engagement very well.
- Teachers plan well-paced and carefully considered tasks, with children working as pairs, groups and individually. In almost all lessons, children participate very well in activities and are keen to learn. In almost all lessons, teachers plan learning which is well matched to the needs of children.
- Teachers recently worked with the headteacher to create an 'excellent lesson' model. This is beginning to support consistency of learner's experiences. In almost all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning with children and explain how they can be successful. Staff have begun to co-create steps for success with children. This is at the very early stages. Staff should make these steps more specific. This should allow children to understand more clearly what success looks like and know when they have achieved it.
- In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to clarify children's learning and understanding. In a majority of lessons, teachers use higher-order questioning to encourage children to think more deeply and creatively. For example, through discussing mental maths strategies.
- All teachers involve children very well in planning learning which uses links across different subjects. Children choose the contexts for topic and co-design planning through use of 'big questions' which the whole class considers. Teachers also encourage children to follow individual interests through asking 'small questions' which they research independently. This helps children experience more personalisation and choice and take more responsibility for their learning.

- In most lessons, staff use verbal feedback effectively to support children's learning. Teachers are at the early stages of using 'writing rubrics' to support improved progress in writing. This is beginning to support greater consistency in teachers' use of feedback and is helping children understand better how to improve their writing. Teachers support children's progress in writing through providing opportunities for children to review and edit their work to make improvements. Teachers should continue to develop their use of written feedback to help children further improve their work.
- Teachers are making increasingly effective use of digital technologies to enhance and support learning. Children benefit from using text readers, editing functions and are highly motivated by opportunities to use green screen technology and digital tools to present their work. For example, children recently created four-dimensional models of the Titanic. Teachers should continue to develop digital skills to enhance children's learning experiences across the curriculum.
- Staff have made a positive start to developing younger children's learning environments to support learning through play. Teachers in the early stages provide an appropriate balance of teacher and child-led learning which is providing children with opportunities for creativity, discovery and curiosity. The headteacher should continue to work with staff to develop learning through play.
- Teachers use a helpful assessment calendar to gather clear and reliable information about children's progress. They use a wide variety of summative and standardised assessments well to support their planning for children's next steps in learning. Teachers use high-quality assessments to understand children's progress and identify individual strengths and next steps in learning.
- All teachers participate successfully in moderation activities with colleagues across the cluster and the local authority. As a result, they have developed a strong understanding of national standards in literacy and numeracy. This is supporting them to make robust professional judgements about children's attainment. Staff are now well placed to extend moderation activities to other areas to ensure that children's progress is understood consistently across the curriculum.
- All teachers plan children's learning effectively over different timescales using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), including how they will assess progress. Teachers plan across curricular areas, allowing children to make meaningful links in their learning.
- The headteacher and teachers use data very effectively to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy over time. They meet termly to discuss progress and identify any interventions required to ensure children make the best possible progress. Staff use data well to monitor the impact of interventions and analyse it through different lenses, such as gender and entitlement to free school meals

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff use local authority progression pathways effectively to support children's learning well in all curriculum areas. This ensures children experience breadth and depth of learning and helps children to make connections between the knowledge and skills they are learning. Going forward, the headteacher should work with staff to review the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure children's experiences are broad, progressive and meaningful.
- Across the school, children take their learning outdoors and benefit from planned outdoor learning days which focus on aspects of learning for sustainability. Staff should now develop a progressive outdoor learning programme to support children to build on and develop their skills.
- Teachers have developed a food skills progression pathway. Staff have adapted spaces in the playground successfully to provide opportunities for children to grow a variety of vegetables and plants. As a result, children are developing skills in cutting and measuring to build their cooking skills.
- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education every week. Teachers make effective use of available outdoor spaces to support the development of physical skills.
- All children across the school learn French and older children also learn Mandarin taught by a visiting specialist in line with the 1 + 2 language policy. Staff make use of a well-planned progressive pathway to deliver this.
- Children receive their entitlement to religious and moral education and religious observance following an appropriate pathway. The progression pathway includes learning about Christianity and other world faiths. For example, older children recently learned about the beliefs of the Sikh community. Children participate in religious observance through attending services across the year at the local church.
- Children benefit from access to a wide range of books in classrooms and the school library, including a range of texts which support dyslexic learners. The school has successfully achieved the gold level for an accredited reading programme.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents say the headteacher and staff know their children well and treat them respectfully. Almost all parents are satisfied with the quality of teaching and would recommend the school to others. They value the range of communication from the headteacher and information about their children's learning which is shared through digital platforms regularly. This helps keep parents informed about their children's learning experiences. Parents value the opportunity to attend events such as celebrations of learning, open evenings and performances.
- Parents make a valuable contribution to the life and the work of the school in a variety of ways. They make important contributions towards the experiences offered to children in weekly 'skills academy' activities. Each class has a parent representative who disseminates specific information to their parent group and gathers their views to bring to Parent Council meetings. The Parent Council are involved in self-evaluation activities and consulted in relation to school improvement priorities.

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

- Across the school children benefit from a nurturing and caring learning environment, where relationships between staff and children are very positive and supportive. The headteacher and staff are sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing and the needs of all children. Children are encouraged to understand and respect others with a strong focus on the school values. All children show consideration for each other and demonstrate very good behaviour.
- Staff have engaged in a range of effective professional learning about the importance of developing inclusive learning environments. This has led to changes in classroom seating arrangements, creation of calm space and the introduction of regular brain breaks. Children benefit from daily 'check-ins' with teachers which help staff monitor children's sense of wellbeing.
- Children create class charters which reflect the school values and the wellbeing indicators. They can give some examples about what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Children should now be supported to evaluate their progress in wellbeing regularly against the wellbeing indicators. This will help children to develop their understanding of the language of wellbeing and help identify trends and common areas for improvement relating to wellbeing across the school.
- Most children can discuss how to stay safe and would have an adult to speak to if they were upset. Children learn about the importance of digital safety. Digital leaders support digital shared learning events, highlighting 'top tips' for staying safe online. A few children feel that the school does not deal well with bullying. As planned, staff should now work with children and families to update the positive relationships policy in line with local authority and national guidance. It will be important to establish a shared understanding of bullying and how concerns are addressed.
- Children's wellbeing is well supported by a range of experiences such as participation in termly outdoor learning days and a range of clubs and activities which increase their sense of achievement. For example, children across the school take part enthusiastically in weekly 'skills academy' lessons which provides opportunities to be active and learn new skills such as cooking and coding. Older children confidently act as 'buddies' to support younger children which is helping them to develop a strong sense of responsibility. Children have effective opportunities to learn about the importance of being a responsible global citizen through learning about global goals and learning for sustainability. Children benefit from a range of activities to develop their physical health, fitness and teamwork skills. These include access to clubs and participation in sporting competitions with local schools.

- Across the school, children participate actively in decisions which affect their learning. They have regular opportunities to express their views through pupil surveys and through leadership roles. As a result, the majority of children say that their views are acted upon by staff. As planned, the headteacher should work with staff to further develop children's understanding of their rights in different contexts.
- The headteacher has created a helpful overview with clear strategies and approaches for individual children who require additional support with their learning. These are regularly reviewed with staff, parents and children. The headteacher makes effective use of partner agencies, seeking appropriate professional advice and guidance as required. As a result, partners such as a visual impairment teacher, Young Carers and the local authority wellbeing team contribute well to positive outcomes for children. Parents report positive experiences in the support provided by the headteacher and staff in relation to their children's differing learning needs. Almost all children who require additional support are making good progress towards individual targets. Going forward, the headteacher should continue to ensure that children's targets in plans are clear and measurable.
- The headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of statutory duties and responsibilities. The school's approaches to child protection, safeguarding and meeting the additional support needs of learners are embedded in legislation and national guidance such as Getting it Right for Every Child.
- Children and their families access a range of events which help children transition successfully to school. Teachers link well with associated secondary schools to support children as they move from P7 to S1.
- Children are developing an understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity. They learn about diversity through a range of curricular and other activities. For example, children learn about neurodiversity at assemblies. This helps children develop an understanding of how children can think in different ways. Staff should continue to support children develop their understanding of protected characteristics and the importance of challenging discrimination.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- As the school roll comprises a small number of children at each stage, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is to ensure the identity of individuals is not disclosed.
- Overall attainment is very good. A minority of children achieve national expectations early in literacy and numeracy. Almost all children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children's listening and talking skills are very good. Children's skills are enhanced through a range of activities such as making presentations linked to topics, giving speeches at assemblies, through school performances and poetry recitals.
- Almost all children who have achieved early level speak articulately when talking to adults. They listen respectfully to each other, taking turns to speak and respond relevantly to questions from others. Almost all children who have achieved first level, talk confidently about books they are reading, explaining their preferences for particular texts. Children who are working towards second level confidently share their ideas and opinions and build on each other's contributions very effectively.

Reading

- Almost all children who have achieved early level recognise, say and read simple words with confidence. They use their knowledge of sounds to decode new and increasingly complex words. A few children would benefit from making use of the cover, author and/or illustrator when reading for enjoyment. Almost all children who have achieved first level read with expression and make effective use of punctuation. A few children would benefit from further support to develop their ability to answer inferential questions. This will help them gain a deeper understanding of texts. Children who are working towards second level confidently describe how to summarise, skim and scan texts for information.

Writing

- Almost all children who have achieved early level use simple punctuation and write using a few descriptive words to engage the reader. Almost all try to spell unfamiliar words. Almost all children who have achieved first level organise their writing in a logical order using relevant and engaging vocabulary. They edit their work successfully to make improvements. A few

children should continue to develop their spelling skills. This will help them write with greater accuracy and independence. Children who are working towards second level write for a range of purposes, for example writing letters to local community organisations and writing persuasively. Children's imaginative writing is scaffolded well through use of creative contexts for writing. There is potential for older children to write more extended pieces more frequently with a continued focus on improving spelling.

- Across the school, children benefit from a consistent focus on the high standards of presentation of work and regular practice in developing their handwriting skills.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Overall, children's knowledge, skills and understanding of number, money and measure is very well supported through use of real-life contexts.
- Almost all children who have achieved early level are increasingly confident in using a variety of strategies for calculating addition and subtraction problems using numbers. Almost all children identify the number before, after or in-between to 100. Almost all children who have achieved first level add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately and round confidently to the nearest 10 or 100. They apply their numeracy skills well in real-life contexts, using appropriate units of measurement. Children who are working towards second level, confidently round numbers to the nearest 1000 and 10,000 and write larger numbers in words. They convert simple fractions to decimals and percentages accurately. They display strong understanding of aspects of financial education. Children at first and second levels should continue to develop mental agility skills to improve speed and efficiency in calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children who have achieved early level identify accurately common two-dimensional shapes. At first level, almost all children can identify, describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. Children who are working toward second level are developing their understanding of different types of angles. Across the school children would benefit more support to recognise, describe, and sort common three-dimensional objects according to various criteria.

Information handling

- Overall, children are developing a very good understanding of how information can be displayed and analysed in a range of ways such as pictograms and graphs. They collect information using tally marks and can display their data in graphs and charts including through using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The school's data reflects consistently high levels of attainment for literacy and numeracy over several years. Most children make very good progress over time. The headteacher has robust processes in place to monitor and track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. She meets with teachers regularly to discuss children's progress and achievements. These processes ensure timely recording of progress over time. This approach helps teachers identify where more challenge or support is required to ensure children make as much progress as possible.
- Over time, children's attendance is above national averages. Attendance across the school was 96.2% in June 2025. A few children have persistent absence of more than 10%, often due

to term-time holidays. The headteacher employs a personal, relationships-based approach to working with parents to improve attendance. This approach is supporting improvements in individual children's attendance. There are currently no children on part-time timetables and there have been no exclusions in recent years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children celebrate their achievements during assemblies by sharing their successes with classmates and staff. They also use the "Orr-some Wall" to proudly display their wider achievements. Children say that this helps build their confidence and encourages them to keep trying their best in all areas of learning.
- Older children are given meaningful leadership opportunities. Children talk proudly about their responsibilities particularly in relation to the events they lead, such as the organisation of biannual Burn's Supper. These opportunities are successfully developing children's skills for learning, life and work.
- All children have opportunities to develop skills through a variety of extra-curricular clubs and through weekly 'skills academy' activities. Examples of areas of focus for skills academies include construction skills, eco and science. Staff should now support children to identify the skills they gain through these experiences and record their skills development. This will help teachers to plan further opportunities to build children's interests to support progression over time.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff understand the social and economic contexts of the school community very well. They carefully review children's progress and identify any gaps in learning. They design interventions which will have the greatest impact on raising attainment and carefully monitor the impact of outcomes. This results in most children who receive support making accelerated progress in their learning.
- The headteacher considers children's personal circumstances to ensure all children participate fully in aspects of school life. She provides discreet support to families facing financial challenges. This includes access to a pre-loved uniform bank, essential toiletries, and stationery. This helps reduce the cost of the school day and ensures all children can take part in school life with confidence and equity.

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.