

Summarised inspection findings

St Charles' Primary School

Renfrewshire Council

10 March 2026

Key contextual information

St Charles' Primary and Early Learning Childcare Class (ELCC) is a denominational school situated in the Paisley area of Renfrewshire. The school has a roll of 373 children organised across 14 classes. There are 48 children who are aged three to five, and 6 children under three-year-olds enrolled in the nursery class.

The headteacher has been in post for 10 years. The leadership team has had a number of changes over the past year. There is a deputy headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher. There are also two acting principal teachers in post.

Currently, 44% of children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 to 3. Around 18% of children are registered for free school meals. Across the school, 30% of children are recorded by the school as requiring additional support with their learning and 10% of pupils have English as an additional language.

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 established a warm, supportive, nurturing learning community. She has collaborated well with partners, the parish and schools in the local cluster to build a supportive community around the school. Senior leaders and staff have a strong understanding of the school's socio-economic context. Children benefit from positive relationships with staff and with each other. All staff demonstrate a strong understanding of children as individuals and use this information well to cultivate positive relationships.
- Senior leaders involved meaningfully the whole school community to revise the school values. The values of kindness, honesty, and determination embedded across the school and reflect well the Gospel values. Staff and children refer to the values during learning and at assemblies. Children are awarded house points for displaying their values. This ensures the values are understood and visible in the work and life of the school. As a result, almost all children demonstrate them consistently in their interactions.
- Senior leaders have created an appropriate quality assurance calendar which outlines activities to monitor the effectiveness of the work of the school. They implement these activities systematically across the year. Senior leaders undertake classroom observations, review children's work and talk to groups of children about their learning. In addition, they hold helpful termly discussions with teachers regarding children's attainment and progress. The headteacher should increase the rigour of quality assurance activities to ensure that the

activities support consistent high-quality learning, teaching and expectations, and inform strategic planning.

- All staff contribute to self-evaluation using *How good is our school?* 4th edition. Senior leaders gather the opinions of staff, parents, and children well to identify areas for improvement. They communicate the results of surveys to the school community through assemblies and newsletters. Senior leaders use a range of data, including this stakeholder feedback, to help them identify priorities for the school improvement plan (SIP). Senior leaders should now streamline their systems to make sure all data gathered is accurate and reliable.
- This session, the improvement plan focuses on improving attainment in aspects of literacy and numeracy and meeting the needs of all through inclusive practices. Additionally, there is a cluster approach to the development of skills across the curriculum. Senior leaders protect time for staff to work together on identified priorities and to engage in relevant professional learning. Senior leaders correctly identified the need to improve school attendance for a minority of children. Going forward, senior leaders should use data on children's progress more carefully to review the priorities that will make the best impact on children's progress. Additionally, they should make sure that the strategic pace of change is brisk so that improved outcomes are achieved for all children.
- The headteacher creates conditions where teachers feel confident to lead change and improvement. Teachers engage well in effective annual professional review and development meetings. They identify targets informed by professional standards, the school improvement plan and aspects of education that are of particular interest to them. A few teachers lead priority areas from the school improvement plan and drive whole school change. They also support the development of whole school guidance, for example, the environmental guidance and the learning and teaching policy. Senior leaders should now ensure strategic systems align the work of all project/team leads to create a more consistent and coherent whole-school approach to improvement.
- All teachers participate in professional enquiry linked to the SIP. Staff work effectively with colleagues to share knowledge and learn from each other. This supports a culture of collaboration across the school. Additionally, teachers work with staff from other schools within the authority to share practice. All staff engage in a range of appropriate professional learning activities. Recent professional learning has had a focus on nurturing approaches. This has enabled staff to identify strategies to further support children.
- All children from P5-7 participate in citizenship groups such as the pupil leadership group, little librarians and young leaders of learning. Children who are digital leaders supported P1 children to learn simple coding. Children evaluate the impact of their group's work and talk confidently about the positive difference they are making. They enjoy contributing to the life of the school and believe staff value their ideas and efforts. Children speak enthusiastically about the suggestion box that everyone can access. They explain that it has led to positive change in the school, such as adding more playground equipment. This supports children to recognise the role they play in achieving positive change for their school. Senior leaders should now introduce opportunities for younger children to be meaningfully involved in influencing and contributing to future improvements.

- Staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. The headteacher has a strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). She has allocated this funding effectively for additional staffing and resources to support children with their wellbeing and learning. The headteacher should now involve parents and children more fully in agreeing the focus of PEF to address any poverty related attainment gap.

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

- Across the school, positive relationships are evident between children and adults and among children. Almost all children are well mannered and eager to share their learning. Children's learning is underpinned by the school values which are known and understood by them. Teachers refer to these values to promote positive expectations of learning. This is evident in how proud the children are of their school and their learning.
- Teachers have created well organised and welcoming learning environments. Expectations for these spaces are outlined in the school's learning environment and display guidance. As planned, staff should continue with their plans to further develop their classroom environments so that they are consistently nurturing and inclusive.
- Almost all children behave well. Staff deal sensitively and effectively with any instances of dysregulated or challenging behaviour. They have adopted a range of wellbeing approaches to support children's behaviour and minimise the potential negative impact this may have for all children. A few children would benefit from further support to listen well to adults and to their peers.
- All teachers share with children the purpose of learning and explain how they can be successful. Most teachers provide clear instructions and explanations of learning tasks. When the purpose of learning and explanations are clear, children are enthusiastic and motivated learners. Most children are keen to lead their learning when given the opportunity to do so. In a few lessons, teachers make effective reference to children's prior learning. Staff should now focus on making learning intentions and success criteria more clearly aligned to the knowledge and skills being developed. This will support children to make meaningful links across their learning.
- Across the school, most children engage well with their learning. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is brisk, this helps to increase children's motivation further. Overall, learning is too teacher led and a few children disengage with learning as a result. Supported by senior leaders, teachers should focus on achieving a more effective balance between direct teaching and independent learning. This should promote deeper understanding and sustained engagement for children.
- Most teachers use questioning well to check for understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully to challenge children's thinking and support the development of higher order thinking skills. Teachers are beginning to support children to identify and evaluate the

skills they use across different contexts for learning. All staff should now further develop their use of higher-order questioning helping to challenge children's thinking.

- Teachers use interactive boards effectively to introduce lessons, model learning and record children's contributions. Children are confident in using technologies to enhance their learning and support research. Where skills are discretely taught children are motivated and engaged. Teachers use technology effectively to support children who face barriers to their learning. For example, reading pens help children with English as an additional language or specific literacy difficulties.
- Children at early level are not yet experiencing play-based approaches to learning. Staff need to provide children with opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning through play. Senior leaders should now work with staff to develop environments to support child-initiated learning within the early level. Senior leaders and teachers should engage with national practice guidance alongside opportunities for professional learning to further develop understanding of play pedagogy.
- Senior leaders and teachers have worked together to agree the features of a good lesson in St Charles' Primary. Teachers use this agreed framework to structure most lessons. Senior leaders should now work with teachers to identify examples of highly effective practice and share this throughout the school. Children's voice in this development should be strengthened, building on their roles as young leaders of learning to ensure consistently high-quality learning matched to their interests and needs.
- Almost all teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to children about their learning. In a few lessons, teachers effectively link feedback to the intended learning and how children will be successful in their learning. Most teachers link feedback and plenary discussions to the skills children are developing. Teachers now need to provide all children with high-quality written feedback on their work. This written feedback should help children to better identify what they have done well and what they now need to improve.
- In almost all classes, children use self-assessment on a regular basis in writing. This is helping children to identify their successes and next steps in writing. Children identify a personal target to support their progress in literacy, numeracy or health and wellbeing. Teachers and children work effectively together to evaluate children's progress towards achieving these. Going forward, children's learning targets should link more closely to teacher feedback and identified next steps in knowledge and skills.
- All teachers implement the school's agreed assessment calendar across the year. Teachers use assessments to inform planning and identify next steps, including any support needed. All staff engage in regular termly meetings with senior leaders to review planning for curricular design, discuss children's progress and identify support needs. This should now include a focus on children who require more challenge to make further progress. Staff work well with colleagues across the local authority and take part in a range of relevant moderation activities in school. All staff are part of the school's planning, assessment and moderation teams. This is helping inform a shared understanding of national standards and increasing confidence in the learning, teaching and assessment cycle.

- Teachers plan learning effectively over short, medium and long timescales, using local authority and school-developed progression pathways. Senior leaders and teachers should now ensure that planning is well matched to individual children learning needs and abilities. In almost all classes children have a say in what they want to learn and how through interdisciplinary learning. In a few classes children have a voice in planning for literacy and numeracy. Moving forward, the headteacher and staff should build on this progress. They should increase opportunities for children to plan, lead and evaluate their own learning experiences.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers plan using local authority progression pathways and school frameworks across almost all areas of the curriculum. Teacher's planning takes appropriate account of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Teachers now need to review the planning approaches for health and wellbeing to provide appropriate breadth and balance across all organisers.
- All children receive two hours of quality physical education each week, using indoor and outdoor spaces as appropriate. Children receive their entitlement to learn languages in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 languages policy. Children at all stages learn Spanish, and older children also learn French.
- Children participate in religious observance in classes, assemblies and attend Mass at the local church regularly. Senior leaders and staff provide well-planned opportunities to support children to learn about and practise their faith in different ways across the school community. This includes participation in the Pope Francis Faith awards. Children contribute to their school community well supported by positive partnerships with a variety of local organisations.
- Teachers are not yet planning for relevant opportunities for outdoor learning, enabling children to develop skills and deepen their understanding of different topics. Staff should increase outdoor learning within the school grounds, review the outdoor learning offer and develop progression in children's skills.
- Children benefit from effective and timely transition arrangements for moving into P1, between stages and on to secondary school. This includes enhanced transition arrangements and meetings for those children who require additional support with their learning and wellbeing. As a result, children who face barriers to learning are supported well through transitions.
- Reading for enjoyment is promoted across the school. This is supported through a small school library, class libraries and reading areas in the playground for children. Class libraries offer a range of fiction and non-fiction books. Staff are providing opportunities for children to select texts for school libraries through the little librarians group. Children and staff are proud of their gold accreditation for their reading development.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders provide families with regular updates on the life of the school and planned events through regular newsletters and social media updates. Teachers share children's experiences and learning through an online platform. Staff organise a wide range of events to support high-quality parental engagement. These include meet the teacher events and curriculum evenings. Family learning events to promote reading for pleasure, numeracy workshops and dyslexia information sessions are well-attended. These events provide parents with greater understanding of their child's learning and progress and of how they can support their child at home.
- Senior leaders work strategically with a wide range of community partners to support improved outcomes for children and families. These include the local library services, third sector partners and family wellbeing services. Through links with a local football club, children and families benefited from workshops linking numeracy and football. This increases children's motivation and makes clear the links to numeracy in real-life situations. Parent volunteers provide a range of helpful and impactful support to children. For example, supporting reading for pleasure, trips, gardening and liturgy. This contributes to the strong sense of school community and supports the school's values very well.
- The Parent Council (Parent Hub) represent parents effectively at regular meetings with the headteacher. Parent Council representatives help make decisions about improvement priorities and how the school allocates funding. Most parents report they are informed about the work of the Parent Hub and feel encouraged to be involved in this work.

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 model the school's values very well in the caring relationships they have with children and their families. They have a strong understanding of children's wellbeing needs and use this knowledge of children as individuals to support wellbeing very successfully. As a result, children learn and develop in a positive and supportive learning environment where they feel cared for and valued. This supports their wellbeing and helps them to engage well with learning.
- Children are friendly, respectful to others and welcoming to visitors. Almost all children behave well and display the school values of kindness, honesty and determination. Older children support younger children very well in a variety of roles, for example welcoming younger children when they come into school in the morning. This supports well the nurturing ethos and helps create a strong sense of school community.
- Senior leaders and staff provide effective support to children who require additional support to regulate their behaviour using agreed strategies and approaches. Support staff provide highly effective support for a few children who require bespoke timetables linked to their learning and wellbeing needs. These approaches are helping to children to engage with learning and reduce the number of incidents of dysregulated behaviour. Staff should continue to build on the progress made with planning for individual children's support.
- Children create class charters which reflect the school values, wellbeing indicators and children's rights. This is helping children across all stages to develop well their understanding of the wellbeing indicators and the link with the UN Convention on Rights of the Child. Children benefit from a range of activities to develop their physical health, fitness and teamwork skills. These include access to lunchtime and other clubs where they play football, netball and practise cheerleading. This ensures that all children are involved in physical activity and have opportunities to develop teamwork and communication skills.
- Most children can identify a trusted adult in school that they can speak to if they are worried or upset. Senior leaders help children to learn about the impact of bullying behaviour in a variety of ways including through assemblies and class lessons. Senior leaders should now work with children, staff and families to develop a shared understanding of bullying and how concerns are addressed. They should support those children who feel that the school does not deal well with bullying. As part of this, senior leaders should review, streamline and update the school's policies in line with national guidance.

- All staff have engaged well in high-quality professional learning to support children's needs. They have participated in local authority training on neurodiversity, nurture and wellbeing indicators. This has helped to create a consistent and caring approach to meeting needs and supporting children across the school. These approaches are having a very positive impact on the wellbeing and inclusion of children who need them. Children are more engaged in their learning and able to access more areas of the curriculum. Staff plan to focus next on enhancing classroom learning environments.
- Across the school, children benefit from daily check-ins which help staff support and monitor children's sense of wellbeing. Senior leaders and staff act on feedback providing effective support where needed in response to information provided by children. In addition, senior leaders hold regular checks-in with specific groups of children including those who have experienced care. As a result, most children feel they have someone to talk to if they are worried or upset.
- Children complete wellbeing surveys bi-annually. These provide senior leaders and teachers with useful information about children's wellbeing. Effective one-to-one interventions or follow up discussions take place where required. This ensures children feel listened to, supporting their wellbeing and engagement in learning. As a next step, senior leaders should consider sharing collated whole school trends and data with children as they currently do with teachers. This would help develop children's understanding of the purpose of the wellbeing surveys and how the information is used to support their wellbeing.
- Senior leaders and staff discuss children's wellbeing needs at termly tracking meetings. This helps senior leaders and staff identify the need for interventions and supports. A staged intervention approach is established and supported by local authority procedures for children who require additional support with their learning. Staff plan appropriate support and interventions to meet the needs identified. Staff monitor well the impact of these interventions to identify the difference being made for individual children and make adaptations where required. The majority of children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress in relation to specific targets.
- Staff work with a range of partners to provide children with impactful support for their learning and wellbeing. This includes support from local community partners through a local football club, dance teacher and local chaplains. Local authority partners, such as the educational psychology service, health and wellbeing team and teachers of English as an additional language, provide effective support. They work well with individual children and groups in a range of ways. These partnerships are supporting a range of improved outcomes for children including their resilience, confidence, social skills and wellbeing.
- The headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of statutory duties and responsibilities. The school's approaches to child protection, safeguarding and meeting children's additional support needs align well with legislation and national guidance. This includes guidance such as Getting it Right for Every Child. This leads to children receiving the appropriate support to address any significant wellbeing issues.
- Children benefit from opportunities to celebrate diversity within the school community through a range of curricular and other activities. Older children developed their knowledge of

discrimination and prejudice through participating in Black History month and have learned about sectarianism through a class novel. Children in P5 benefited from a workshop focused on 'Turning disabilities into possibilities'. Staff encourage children to share their experience and culture with their peers. The pupil led Community Involvement citizenship group has worked on initiatives to represent the wide range of nationalities within the school. This is resulting in children developing a greater awareness of different cultures. A new regular feature of the school bulletin focuses on promoting racial literacy to help children understand and appreciate diversity. Staff should continue to support children at all levels develop their understanding of protected characteristics and the importance of challenging discrimination.

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

- Across the school, most children are on track to achieve expected national standards in literacy and numeracy. A few children at every stage are capable of achieving more in their learning.
- Overall, the majority of children who require additional support for their learning are making good progress towards individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- At early level most children are making satisfactory progress in their learning. At first and second level, most children are making good progress in their learning in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Most children at early level listen to others but need more support to take turns when talking in groups. At first and second level, most children share their views and communicate clearly with others. They contribute to discussions and engage with others for a range of purposes. Children would benefit from planned experiences in engaging in debates to explore different points of view.

Reading

- Most children at early level use their growing knowledge of initial sounds and blends to read simple words. They enjoy predicting what might happen next in stories. Children should develop further their understanding of the key features of a book. At first and second level, most children read fluently with understanding and increasing expression. At first level, most children answer literal questions about texts and are increasing their confidence when asked inferential questions. At second level, most children use skills such as skimming and scanning to find key information. Across first and second level, next steps are to develop children's ability to discuss the writer's style and other features appropriate to different genres.

Writing

- Most children at early level write their name and all initial sounds. A few children write simple sentences independently and are developing skills in using capital letters and full stops. Children need more opportunities to write, including through play. Staff should ensure that children are using the correct letter formations to support writing. At first level, most children use their knowledge of letter sounds and spelling rules to attempt writing unfamiliar words. They are less confident in their knowledge of connectives to use different sentence structures to engage the

reader. Most children at second level use their knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation to write successfully. Children at second level require greater experience of writing across the curriculum. Across the school, all children require further development of writing extended pieces across different genres more regularly.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children at early level are making satisfactory progress and most children at first and second levels are making good progress in numeracy and maths. A few children at every stage are capable of making greater progress.

Number, money and measure

- Most children at early level count to and identify numbers before, after and between to 20. They add numbers within 10 with accuracy. They would benefit from developing knowledge of time, money and measure, including in the context of play. At first level, most children add and subtract two-digit numbers accurately and round confidently to the nearest 10 or 100. They are less confident with fractions and would benefit from more practise using multiplication facts to solve simple division problems. Most children at second level use knowledge of equivalent forms of fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. They read and record time in 12- and 24-hour notation and convert between the two. They are less confident finding the fraction of an amount and would benefit from developing a stronger understanding of financial education.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children identify two-dimensional (2D) shapes and use simple positional language correctly. They are less confident in identifying three-dimensional objects. Most children at first level accurately describe the properties of 2D shapes. They are less confident in identifying right angles. At second level, most children accurately identify a range of angles. They identify and illustrate symmetry on a range of 2D shapes. At second level children would benefit from increased opportunities to revisit prior learning such as how to calculate areas and perimeters.

Information handling

- At all levels children answer questions about charts and graphs showing information, as appropriate to their ages and stage. Children at first and second level should have more practice collecting and displaying data for a range of purposes, including through use of digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Overall, attainment has remained broadly stable over a number of years. The school's data shows a decrease in attainment at first level over time. By the end of second level, most children are on track to achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy. Children who are at risk of not achieving national expectations in literacy and numeracy are identified and provided with support. Senior leaders and staff monitor the progress of these children regularly. This is helping to demonstrate that planned interventions are resulting in improved outcomes for children. Senior leaders should continue to build on existing tracking systems across literacy and numeracy to identify children across the school who are capable of making greater progress. Senior leaders should implement a more robust tracking system and more

effective use of benchmarks and assessment data to support teacher professional judgement to be more accurate.

- Children's attendance has been below the national average for several years, although there have been marginal increases each year. Last session, children's attendance was 92.2% with 31% having attendance below 90%. There are no children on part-time timetables. Senior leaders work closely with the Family Wellbeing service to support families with low attendance. They offer helpful regular check-ins and support for coming to school. Children receive tailored support from staff in school to build trust and routines aimed at reducing barriers preventing them in coming to school. This is starting to help a few children improve their attendance. This session, attendance has been a priority with the SIP. Work to take this forward and is at the early stages of implementation. Senior leaders must continue to prioritise attendance to strengthen the impact of current interventions. Children with very low attendance need better coordinated support. This includes identifying those who would benefit from additional support from external agencies. Senior leaders should monitor which interventions improve attendance most effectively.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- There is a strong emphasis on recognising children's achievements in and out with school. These are valued and celebrated through regular assemblies and WOW wall displays. Children value the Golden Ticket events hosted by the headteacher which recognise their achievement and those who demonstrate the school values.
- Children across P5–P7 are developing important skills, including collaboration, creativity, communication, and integrity, through active participation in a range of leadership roles. Young leaders for learning are beginning to form meaningful links with other schools in the local area, helping to develop and enhance learning experiences for all learners.
- Children engage effectively with partners such as the Parish Church and local football team to support their learning. Older children develop spiritual, personal, and interpersonal skills aligned with Catholic values and the teachings of the church through participation in the Pope Francis Faith Award and wider parish groups. Children show pride in their achievements and are beginning to link these experiences to skills for learning, life and work. As planned, senior leaders should continue developing systems to monitor and track the skills children gain through achievements and leadership groups.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a good understanding of equity, the socio-economic context of the school and of the challenges faced by children and families. The school's equity strategy is reviewed annually and shared with staff, parents and partners. This is ensuring there is a clear strategy across the school community.
- Staff have taken positive steps to reduce the cost of the school day by providing access to free clubs, uniform support and wider family support. The school has a positive working relationship with a charitable foundation which provides financial support to mitigate barriers for children and families.
- Senior leaders have developed clear plans for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Teachers and support staff have been deployed to provide targeted interventions for children in

literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Family learning sessions have been delivered in literacy and numeracy to increase parent and carers confidence to support learning at home. As a result of targeted interventions last session, the school can evidence how its approaches are helping to narrow the poverty related attainment gap in reading.

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.