

Summarised inspection findings

Loretto RC Primary School

East Lothian Council

24 June 2025

Key contextual information

Loretto RC Primary School and Nursery is a denominational school situated in Musselburgh, East Lothian. It serves the local communities of Musselburgh, Whitecraig and Wallyford. At the time of the inspection, there were 167 children organised across seven classes. There are 24 children attending the nursery. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 2 to 4, with the minority living in deciles 5 to 10.

Across the school, 32% of children have additional support needs. Approximately one fifth of children receive free school meals and one third have English as an additional language. Attendance is in line with the national average. The school has experienced a number of changes in the leadership team in the past few years. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2024. There is one 0.7 FTE principal teacher who has a 0.6 FTE teaching commitment.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory
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 changes in leadership over the past three years has impacted negatively on the pace of change and strategic improvement. The school community warmly welcomed the appointment of the new headteacher which has brought much needed stability. Since her appointment, the headteacher has secured positive relationships with staff, children and parents.
- The headteacher and staff have established a caring ethos which reflects well the Gospel values. Children are friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. All staff work well together to develop positive relationships with children and families. As a result, most children are happy and feel valued. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to work with the school community to ensure that the school’s vision, values and aims continues to reflect the current context of the school.
- Senior leaders produce an annual improvement plan which identifies key areas to be developed over the course of the session, such as improving approaches to monitoring children’s progress. Staff are beginning to support the implementation of school improvement priorities, for example by participating in working groups. While some progress has been made with planned improvements, the pace of strategic development has been negatively impacted by changes in leadership and issues relating to staffing. Going forward, teachers should be encouraged to take a greater role, and more responsibility to drive forward strategic priorities. It will be important for senior leaders and staff to evaluate the impact of planned improvements on outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders ensure staff have protected time for professional learning to develop their practice. For example, a few staff have engaged in valuable professional learning relating to developing approaches to writing. Staff work well together to share their skills and knowledge

with colleagues across stages, for example in relation to outdoor learning. This is helping build skills within the team.

- The headteacher meets with teachers to engage in annual professional review and development discussions. This year, the process was adapted to have a more coaching approach. Going forward, senior leaders should ensure individual targets and plans are measured against previous targets more robustly. This will help progress key areas for professional development for the following year. Teachers should also link their professional development with the General Teaching Council for Scotland's professional standards. Support staff would benefit from appropriate opportunities for annual reviews which identify areas of interest and professional learning.
- Senior leaders are aware of the need to improve the scope and frequency of quality assurance activities. Staff should now create and implement a robust quality assurance calendar involving class visits and monitoring the quality of children's work. Senior leaders should ensure quality assurance activities link more directly into self-evaluation activities and the identification of school improvement priorities.
- The headteacher recognises the need for greater consistency of practice and approaches to planning, learning, teaching and assessment. Staff should now work together to agree approaches to planning and assessment of children's learning. Senior leaders and staff should also improve their use of data to ensure children make the best possible progress across the curriculum.
- Most children feel staff listen to their views. Across the school, a minority of children have leadership roles, for example as house and vice captains. The pupil council has been involved in a few aspects of school improvement, such as promoting the importance of good attendance. Children show enthusiasm and pride for the contribution they make to the life and the work of the school. Staff should ensure more children have increased opportunities to express their views on issues that affect them, such as school improvement priorities.
- The headteacher is pro-active in encouraging parents to become more involved in the life and work of the school, for example as volunteers. Most parents feel comfortable to approach staff with ideas and suggestions for improvement and feel that their views are taken into account.
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to provide additional staffing to support targeted interventions. The headteacher has some evidence of the impact of interventions in improving outcomes for identified children. Going forward, senior leaders should consider using a wider range of data more effectively to identify gaps in learning. This will help identify which approaches and interventions are needed and making the biggest impact on accelerating children's progress and attainment.

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 a supportive and nurturing ethos across the school. Children are friendly, articulate and well-mannered. Almost all children demonstrate respect towards each other and adults. There are very positive relationships between staff and children and between children. Senior leaders and staff manage situations sensitively when support is required to help a few children engage with their learning or regulate their behaviour.
- Staff and children work well together to embed the language of children's rights into learning and school life. Across the school, almost all children are eager to learn. They listen well to each other and adults and interact positively with others during learning activities. In most lessons, children have opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. Across the school, staff should now ensure children have more opportunities to take a stronger role in leading their learning. They would benefit from being provided with greater personalisation and choice in what and how they learn.
- In almost all lessons, teachers share with children what they are learning and how to be successful. This is supporting children well to identify if they have achieved the intended learning. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. They should now develop questioning to extend children's higher-order thinking skills. Most teachers provide feedback to support children to understand their next steps in learning. A majority of children at first and second level self- and peer-assess their learning in writing using success criteria grids. This is helping them to be aware of how to improve their writing further.
- Staff are at the early stages of introducing play experiences into younger children's daily routines to support their learning. Teachers would benefit from further professional learning using national practice guidance. This will help staff to develop learning environments to support children to consolidate and extend their learning.
- The school grounds and the local environment are ideally suited to support learning outdoors. In the majority of classes, children benefit from regular outdoor learning experiences. Children display high levels of enjoyment and motivation for these learning experiences. These provide valuable opportunities for children to develop a range of skills and attributes, such as team work and problem solving. There is scope to extend this good practice further across the school.
- The headteacher has introduced recently a new learning and teaching policy. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop and use this policy to ensure all children experience high quality learning. Senior leaders should share examples of highly-effective practice within the staff team to support all children to maximise their progress.

- Teachers use a range of standardised assessments at particular points in the year. Other assessment practices are not yet consistent across the school. Senior leaders should now work with staff to develop a clear assessment strategy. This will help support consistency of approaches and provide robust information about children's progress over time, across their learning.
- Teachers engage in useful moderation activities through informal discussions with other staff in school. Senior leaders should now provide more opportunities for formal moderation within the school and with colleagues in other schools. This will support teachers to develop further their understanding of national standards and improve the accuracy of professional judgements of attainment levels across the curriculum.
- The headteacher and staff discuss termly the progress of children. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to develop further a whole school approach to monitoring the progress of children, including those experiencing barriers to their learning. Senior leaders should continue to develop robust tracking and monitoring systems to gather data on the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts of children over time.
- Teachers plan learning over a range of timescales using a variety of planning formats and approaches. Senior leaders should continue to work with teachers to review planning to ensure consistency of approaches.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use a variety of different frameworks and progression pathways to support planning for children's learning. This includes local authority and bespoke frameworks. Staff now need to use these frameworks more consistently to enhance approaches to planning learning across the school.
- Children benefit from lessons in physical education (PE). However, children are not in receipt of their full entitlement to two hours each week. Senior leaders should now ensure that all children receive two hours of high-quality PE provision each week.
- Children learn French across the school and a few classes have opportunities to learn other languages, such as Spanish. Senior leaders should now ensure all children receive their full entitlement to the national modern languages programme.
- Children's religious observance is supported well through effective partnership with the local church and through school assemblies. All children benefit from experiences such as attending church services and celebrations and performing for end of term concerts.
- The school is part of a national initiative to promote enjoyment of reading. Children benefit from access to a large and well-resourced library. Classes enjoy visiting and borrowing books to read in class. A few children would like to be able to borrow books to read at home.
- Teachers provide opportunities for children to learn outdoors. This includes experiences such as paddle boarding, den building, insect hunts and engaging in the John Muir Award. Teachers are at the early stages of implementing a progressive outdoor learning programme to support skills development for children.
- Staff are at an early stage of using digital technology to support and enhance learning and teaching. Teachers should continue to develop digital learning, for example through use of a progressive learning pathway to help children improve their digital skills as they move through the school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Staff work well to develop relationships with parents. As a result, most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or suggestions. Senior leaders seek the views of parents, for example, through questionnaires or feedback at school events. A majority of parents feel that the school takes their views into account when making changes.
- Parents have opportunities regularly to be involved in the life of the school, for example through volunteering and participating in school events. Parents enjoy sharing in their child's learning through 'busy finish' afternoons.
- Senior leaders and staff communicate regularly with parents about the life and work of the school through regular newsletters and class curriculum overviews. This is helping parents to know what children are learning and how they can support their learning at home.
- The Parent Council works closely with senior leaders and staff. They support fundraising for resources, activities and experiences to enhance learning. The Parent Council are informed of school improvement priorities. As planned, senior leaders should extend the involvement of the Parent Council in setting and evaluating 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

- Senior leaders and staff know children very well and create calm, nurturing learning environments which helps children to engage well in learning. Staff work well to develop positive, supportive relationships with children, parents and partners, and between children. Senior leaders and staff are sensitive and responsive to the needs of all children. They are alert to changes in children's personal circumstances and address concerns sensitively.
- Staff assess children's wellbeing through daily wellbeing 'check-ins'. This approach helps staff to identify individual children who require support, and this is helping children to talk about and share their feelings. Staff follow up promptly on any concerns raised, which provides further reassurance and support to children.
- Across the school, almost all children demonstrate respectful behaviours. Staff support a few children well to regulate their emotions when they find situations challenging. All staff have adapted learning environments well to ensure that classrooms are not overstimulating. Children talk positively about calm corners in classrooms and how they are used.
- Most children talk confidently about the importance of living healthily and enjoy opportunities to be active. They are well supported by staff and various partners to participate in a range of clubs and activities. The majority of children take part in a range of outdoor learning activities which is increasing their confidence and resilience.
- Children's achievements are recognised and rewarded which creates a strong sense of belonging to the school community and builds children's confidence well. Children demonstrate a strong understanding of the importance of being included and respected. They treat each other with kindness and demonstrate strong support for each other.
- Children's voice and opinions are increasingly having an impact on the ethos of the school. For example, house and vice captains worked recently with children in each house to create house mottos which celebrate diversity and inclusion. Older children act confidently as buddies to support younger children with a variety of learning and achievement opportunities. This is supporting a nurturing culture, as well as allowing children to develop key skills in communication and resilience.
- Staff and children work together to support the community. For example, children in P6 recently organised a coffee morning, and the school's 'Mini Vinnie' committee are committed to raising funds for different causes. These opportunities are developing well children's sense of responsibility and understanding of how to be an effective contributor. Senior leaders work well with community partners to promote children's spiritual, mental, emotional, social and physical

wellbeing. For example, church representatives support children and their families through sacramental preparation.

- The headteacher works with staff to maintain an overview of children's additional support needs across the school. Staff have established clear plans for children requiring additional support with their learning. Staff increasingly include the views of children and parents when planning individual targets for learning. Staff should continue to ensure that children's targets in child's plans are clear and measurable. This will help staff to identify clearly the impact of interventions on children's progress.
- Staff have a clear understanding of statutory duties and responsibilities. They are confident about procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection. Staff's approaches are embedded in legislation and national guidance such as *Getting it Right for Every Child*. Senior leaders and staff should continue to work together to ensure approaches to record keeping reflect national guidance more fully.
- A majority of children identify examples of children's rights confidently. Older children and a rights respecting pupil group are working towards the next stage in accreditation for a national children's rights award. This is helping children to understand the relevance of children's rights to different aspects of their learning and lives.
- Most children say they feel safe and have someone to talk to about their worries or concerns. A few children feel the school does not deal well with bullying. As planned, staff should now work with children and families to review the anti-bullying and positive relationships policies to reflect national guidance. This should be linked to the school's values and the work being undertaken on children's rights.
- Across the school, teachers use a variety of pathways, programmes and approaches to support children's health and wellbeing. Staff should now review the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure children's experiences are broad, progressive and meaningful. In particular, planned learning should address effectively diversity, equality, and how to challenge discrimination.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. A majority of children at first and second levels, and most children at early level, are on track to achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy this session. A minority of children across the school could achieve more and would benefit from further challenge in their learning to enable them to make better progress.
- The majority of children who require additional support with their learning are making satisfactory progress towards individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in literacy. A few children make good progress, and a few could be making better progress in literacy. A recent focus on writing has supported an improvement in children's writing. As a result, a majority of children at first and second levels make good progress in writing.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children take turns, listen and respond appropriately to others. They are confident to share ideas and show respect to the views of others. At early level, most children listen well to their teachers, follow instructions and ask and answer questions about texts. At first level, most children confidently engage in discussions with their peers and adults, communicate clearly and audibly and contribute at the appropriate time. At second level, most children answer questions, clarify points and plan and deliver an organised presentation. Children are less confident talking about the skills required to speak to an audience or when debating a topic.

Reading

- Across the school, children are given opportunities to read a range of texts. A few children across all levels could be developing reading skills at a faster pace, using more challenging texts.
- Most children at early level recognise initial sounds, and hear and say sounds made by a combination of letters. At first level, a majority of children talk confidently about the books they are reading and read with increasing fluency. They select different texts regularly for enjoyment and explain the reasons why they prefer particular texts. At second level, the majority of children talk about their favourite authors and give explanations confidently about the types of books they enjoy. They are at the early stages of identifying techniques authors use to engage readers, for example, word choice and emotive language. At second level,

children would benefit from experience of answering a range of inferential and evaluative questions about texts.

Writing

- At early level, most children attempt to use their knowledge of sounds to spell familiar words correctly and write a sentence using a simple connective. They should have more regular opportunities to write independently, including in the context of play. At first level, a majority of children punctuate their sentences accurately. At second level, children write for different purposes, for example a letter or newspaper report, using features of that genre. They should continue to be supported to write extended pieces of text to convey information, describe events, and explain processes.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics and a few children are making good progress. Children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to revisit learning to consolidate their understanding of key concepts.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children order numbers within the range of 0 to 20. They accurately compare and measure height using a range of non-standard units. At first level, a majority of children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They add and subtract two-digit numbers and compare the size of simple fractions accurately. They are less confident using multiplication facts. At second level, a majority of children show confidence working with time and money. They would benefit from more practice working with area, perimeter and fractions.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise two-dimensional (2D) shapes and simple three-dimensional (3D) objects. They confidently use positional language and create simple patterns. At first level, most children recognise and can describe 2D shapes and 3D objects. They identify a right angle. At second level, the majority of children are confident using compass directions and identifying a range of angles. They lack confidence describing the properties of 3D objects.

Information handling

- At early level, most children sort objects in a variety of different ways. At first level, a majority of children can extract information from a variety of charts. Children at second level can interpret information and draw accurate conclusions from graphs. They should now develop skills in collecting and displaying information using digital technology, such as using electronic spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy at early level has improved from previous years, but has declined at first and second levels. The headteacher recognises the need to work with staff to develop a stronger understanding of children's attainment over time, including looking closely at the progress of individuals and groups of children. Staff should now work together with senior leaders to ensure robust and consistent information about children's progress is used to raise attainment.
- Attendance levels are in line with national and local authority averages, however a minority of children's attendance is less than 90%. The headteacher follows local authority processes to monitor and support the improved attendance of individual children. The headteacher should continue to work with families and partners to ensure that any children on part-time timetables receive their full entitlement to education.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children benefit from a range of activities which support them to achieve in a range of contexts. Older children develop spiritual, personal, and interpersonal skills aligned with Catholic values and the teachings of Pope Francis through participation in the Pope Francis Award. Children attend after school clubs which develop creativity and sporting skills. Children in P5 complete the John Muir Award and children in other classes take part in outdoor learning activities designed to build confidence and resilience. Through these activities, children are developing a range of skills and attributes such as leadership and teamwork. Children's achievements are celebrated on displays and at school assemblies. House and vice captains proudly give certificates to children in their houses in recognition of good work and achievements. As planned, staff should now track achievements and consider how to profile the skills children are developing through their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the community and are aware of the challenges facing families. For example, the school supports recycling of clothing. The headteacher ensures children who are at risk of missing out have supported opportunities to take part in clubs and activities.
- Senior leaders use the majority of PEF to provide additional staffing to support individual and groups of children. Going forward, senior leaders should ensure that they can demonstrate clearly how PEF is being used to accelerate the progress and improve outcomes for children impacted by financial hardship and other barriers.

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.