

Summarised inspection findings

Tynewater Primary School

Midlothian Council

31 March 2026

Key contextual information

Tynewater Primary School is a non-denominational primary school located in the village of Pathhead in Midlothian. At the time of inspection, there were 155 children on the roll organised across seven classes. There is also a nursery class. The acting headteacher has been in post since June 2025. She is supported by a principal teacher who has a 0.6 full time equivalent teaching commitment to provide additional support for learning. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 5 and 6. Approximately 8% of children are registered for free school meals. The school reported that approximately 17% of children require additional support with their learning.

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	

- All staff know children and their families very well. They work collaboratively to create a highly nurturing, caring and inclusive learning environment across the school. The very positive relationships between staff and children are underpinned well by the school vision, values and aims. Staff encourage children regularly to share their views and children feel confident that staff act value and as a result act upon their views.
- Both children and staff are very proud of their school. Older children consistently demonstrate care and kindness towards younger peers, offering support during play and learning activities. Teachers have carefully audited and adapted their learning environments to maximise children's engagement and participation. These consistent approaches have had a positive impact on children's readiness to learn. As a result, most children are highly motivated and engage appropriately in their learning.
- Almost all children are respectful, polite and supportive of each other. Staff use a rights-based learning approach to help children make positive choices about their behaviour. While a few children occasionally display low-level disruptive behaviours, staff respond skilfully using a range of strategies to reengage them in their learning quickly. The 'Ready to Learn' policy, developed in partnership with children and parents, ensures timely and appropriate support is provided, resulting in fewer incidents of dysregulation. Almost all learners engage in learning responsibly, respectfully and with enthusiasm. Overall, children's behaviour across the school is highly positive.

- Teachers across the school consistently implement an agreed lesson structure, embedding key features of effective learning, teaching and assessment. They use questioning very effectively in almost all lessons to elicit prior knowledge and to check for understanding. A majority of teachers use more in-depth questioning well to extend and broaden children's thinking. In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations and successfully communicate the purpose of learning. This helps children understand what they are learning and how they can demonstrate success. In the majority of lessons children co-create the steps needed to achieve success, promoting ownership of their learning. Staff should continue to work together to build on this effective approach across the school. In doing so they should ensure they communicate the purpose of learning using explanations and vocabulary that are age and stage appropriate.
- Almost all children work together successfully in pairs and small groups. In most lessons, learning activities are well matched to the needs of most children. A few lessons are overly teacher led. In these examples, children would benefit from greater opportunities to take ownership of their learning and demonstrate greater independence. Teachers provide helpful verbal and written feedback in literacy and numeracy. Children use this feedback carefully to set measurable targets which support them to improve their work and tackle next steps with confidence. They talk confidently about how peer- and self-assessment supports their learning in areas such as writing. Teachers are increasingly supporting children well to articulate the skills they are developing in relation to learning, life, and work. They support children very well to make meaningful connections to real-life contexts.
- All children benefit from learning through a progressive digital pathway. This supports children well to develop skills in applying digital learning across the curriculum. For example, all children have developed their knowledge on internet safety. Children who serve as digital leaders actively share their expertise through assemblies and provide practical hands-on support to both peers and staff. The use of assistive technologies provides universal support for all learners while also supporting the delivery of targeted interventions. Senior leaders demonstrate that these interventions have a measurable impact on attainment and achievement. Their approaches are driving continuous improvement in learning and teaching and support equity and inclusion across the school. Staff use an online platform effectively to share children's learning experiences with parents, strengthening home-school partnerships and engagement.
- Children at the early level have regular opportunities to engage in both free and structured play-based learning. The learning environment is positive and nurturing, with most children participating meaningfully and enthusiastically in activities. Teachers make effective use of focused observations during play to assess children's learning and progress. They use these observations purposefully to inform planning ensuring that next steps are well matched to each child's stage of development. Staff have enhanced the outdoor provision creating a more engaging environment that encourages children to spend more time learning and exploring outside. This supports children to develop their communication and teamwork in a different context.
- Senior leaders recently introduced the 'Building the Picture Calendar' providing a comprehensive and well-structured overview of assessment expectations across the school.

Teachers make effective use of a wide range of assessment tools including diagnostic and standardised assessments to monitor children's learning and progress. Staff use assessment information very effectively to plan next steps for groups and individuals. Teachers also assess children on an ongoing basis during learning. In addition, children have opportunities to identify what they want to learn and use self- and peer-assessments to understand the progress that they are making.

- All staff actively engage in activities that deepen their understanding of national standards both within the school and in collaboration with local schools. They benefit from strong links with their cluster colleagues which provide valuable opportunities for professional dialogue. For example, staff recently participated in moderation activities in reading, focusing on how children respond to texts. Almost all teachers report that this has strengthened their confidence in teaching reading. They make effective use of national Benchmarks when forming professional judgements about children's progress at key stages. Senior leaders should continue to broaden the range of moderation approaches to further enhance teachers' confidence across the curriculum.
- A helpful planning and assessment framework is used by all teachers to inform their assessment and planning processes. Teachers make very effective use of local authority progression pathways to plan progressive learning across all areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders and teachers have developed a whole school approach to long-term, medium-term and short-term planning. They use a range of tools well to support effective planning. Teachers plan useful opportunities throughout the year using community engagement and spaces to support children's learning. These are informed by the school community plan and extend learning opportunities for children using the local area.
- Senior leaders and staff have highly effective systems in place to track and monitor the progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing at regular times throughout the year. They review, analyse, and record all additional relevant information relating to every child. Robust processes for the early identification of additional support needs are firmly embedded. The impact of interventions is carefully monitored and changes made to ensure children make the best possible progress. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to use rich assessment data to plan learning activities that provide increased challenge for a few children.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Overall, most children at key reporting stages achieved expected levels of attainment in June 2025. This session, almost all children at early level and second level, and most children at first level, are on track to achieve national expectations in literacy and numeracy. Across the school, a minority of children exceed national expectations in literacy and numeracy.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning make strong progress from prior levels of attainment or towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, almost all children make very good progress in reading and listening and talking. They make good progress in writing.

Listening and talking

- Across the school almost all children are confident and articulate. They enjoy engaging in discussions in class, in small and larger groups. Almost all children listen well to teachers and each other. At early level, children enjoy talking about their experiences and sharing their news with a wider audience through play and in class. They are developing their knowledge of rhyme and building their knowledge of the initial sounds they hear in words. At first level, almost all children speak confidently in front of others and when expressing their opinions. Almost all children at second level respond well to a range of questions. They present confidently to larger audiences. For example, when sharing their ideas during leadership groups and during assemblies for peers and parents. Children across the school, should continue to develop their confidence in building on the contributions of others, clarifying points and supporting the ideas of others.

Reading

- Across the school, children are highly motivated and enthusiastic about reading. They have access to a wide range of texts, including more challenging options which supports progression and choice. Children speak confidently about their favourite genres and books, demonstrating a strong enjoyment of reading.
- At early level, children are developing skills in using their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. They are gaining confidence in reading aloud familiar texts. Almost all children at

first level identify the main ideas of texts and answer confidently literal questions. They need further support to answer inferential questions. A few children need support to improve fluency and expression when reading aloud. At second level children find and select accurately information from a variety of sources and use it to show their understanding of a topic. Almost all children successfully skim and scan texts correctly to locate key information. They accurately distinguish between fact and opinion. They should continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of techniques used in texts to influence the reader.

Writing

- At early level, children are beginning to form letters correctly. Most children write a sentence with support. They benefit from useful opportunities during play for children to continue to develop their writing skills. Most children at first level spell commonly used words and vocabulary correctly. At second level, most children have a good understanding of similes, metaphors and use these appropriately to make their writing more engaging. Across the school, children would benefit from regular opportunities to demonstrate and apply a broad range of writing genres more frequently in real life and unfamiliar contexts.
- Senior leaders and staff recognise gaps in children's writing at identified stages. They have developed a clear strategy to raise attainment in this area through improving approaches to planning, teaching and assessing writing. These approaches are accelerating progress and raising levels of attainment in writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make strong progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all children at early level identify odd and even numbers and sequence numbers correctly up to 30. They are confident about the quantities of numbers and show their understanding pictorially, using concrete materials and mentally. At first level, most children round numbers to the nearest 100 confidently. They solve addition and subtraction problems with two digits. This helps them to solve two-step problems quickly. Children calculate accurately simple fractions of whole numbers. They need to develop further their understanding of equivalent fractions. Almost all children at second level demonstrate quick recall of multiplication and division facts and understand place value well. They calculate accurately change from a given amount and understand the relationship between time, speed and distance. They are less confident when ordering and simplifying fractions.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level understand positional language and make patterns using two-dimensional shapes. At first level, most children understand the properties of three-dimensional objects and describe them using the correct terminology. They need support to develop their understanding of compass points and grid references. Almost all children at second level describe and classify angles using mathematical language including acute and obtuse. They are confident when calculating the area and perimeter of common shapes.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children sort items with accuracy based on their own criteria. They can interpret information from a simple pictograph to answer questions. Most children at first level, understand simple bar graphs and charts and use them successfully to interpret key information. Almost all children working at second level collect data using appropriate methods, create bar charts and analyse this information effectively. They use mathematical vocabulary appropriately to describe the likelihood of events occurring in everyday situations. Children at all levels would benefit from using digital technology more frequently to collect, organise and display information.

Attainment over time

- Overall, children maintain high levels of attainment over time. Senior leaders and teachers use a wide range of robust assessment data very well to address any attainment gaps through targeted support and universal approaches. The headteacher meets with teachers regularly to discuss and analyse standardised assessment information. This helps to support their professional judgements and identify children who would benefit from interventions. This is supporting teachers well to make accurate judgements about children's attainment. The headteacher should now consider how to develop further these very effective systems and processes to track children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- The headteacher monitors overall attendance rigorously. She continually monitors and tracks attendance for groups of children, including those who are impacted by socio-economic factors. Senior leaders act promptly where individual attendance dips below 90%. They work with families to provide support to improve children's attendance at school including the provision of a walking bus. These interventions are having a positive impact on the attendance of individual children. High levels of attendance have been maintained over several years and overall attendance is currently 96.2% which is above the national average. Where appropriate, and through consultation with parents, a few children attend school on a part-time basis. Staff work very well with children and their parents to provide learning at home. They work with parents to help children increase the amount of time they spend in school.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children have regular opportunities to share their achievements from in and out of school. Staff celebrate and recognise these in assemblies, in classes, on a digital platform and through various displays around the school. Staff commend learners who have embodied the four Curriculum for Excellence capacities through the weekly certificates in assembly. Almost all children consistently demonstrate confidence, responsibility, and active citizenship by contributing meaningfully to school and community life. Children demonstrate pupil voice and the school values through their many leadership opportunities. As a result, children demonstrate influence which aligns with school values to drive school improvement priorities.
- Staff use well embedded systems to track achievements and extra-curricular participation. They use this information to provide opportunities for participation and achievement and ensure that no child is at risk of missing out. Staff should now support children to strengthen their understanding of the explicit link between skills development and achievements. This should support children to understand better and articulate the skills they develop through their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a very well-developed understanding of the context of the school and the barriers to learning faced by children, including socio-economic disadvantage. Staff provide sensitive and discreet support children and families to ensure all children are ready to learn and able to participate. The headteacher has extended the tracking of children's progress to include a wider range of factors that could impact on children's progress. For example, teachers track the progress of children who may be care experienced.
- The school's rationale for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is based on an analysis of a wide range of relevant data and information relating to the needs of children in identified groups. Additional staff, funded through PEF, deliver interventions for targeted children. Staff review a range of data very effectively to measure the impact on gaps in children's learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This data demonstrates these interventions are closing gaps in children's attainment.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive two hours of high-quality physical education every week. All children receive their entitlement to experience religious and moral education. All children learn French and older children learn Spanish. This is in alignment with the 1+2 languages policy.
- The headteacher consults with parents about the use of PEF through the Parent Council. She works with children to gather their views through pupil voice leadership groups using a participatory budgeting approach. This helps to inform spending decisions.
- Across the school, children enjoy reading and choose books from the school library. This supports children to develop a growing awareness of different cultures and faiths and help celebrate the growing diversity within the school population. Children benefit from a strong reading culture across the school.

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.