HMIE | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

Summarised inspection findings

Biggar Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

10 November 2026

Key contextual information

Biggar Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the rural market town of Biggar and surrounding areas. The school roll has fluctuated and fallen over the past few years. The current roll is 193 children, arranged over eight classes, five of which are multi-stage. Almost all children live between Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 5 and 8, with most living in deciles 7 and 8. Around 17% of children are in receipt of free school meals. Approximately a fifth of children are recorded as requiring additional support.

The headteacher has led the school since 2012 and is supported by a depute headteacher and two part-time principal teachers. Over the past few years there have been significant changes to the teaching staff.

Biggar Primary School Nursery Class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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

- All staff support the learning and development of children in a child-centred and nurturing way. Together, staff and children have created a strong sense of community within the school. This positive ethos is strengthened by a clear sense of common purpose underpinned by the school's values. These are represented effectively by the 'Biggar Banner'. Children and staff are clear that these values are central to the life and work of the school. Almost all children enjoy learning, are respectful to each other and adults, and are enthusiastic participants in their learning. They are developing their understanding of their rights. Children are motivated to do their best, confidently articulating how the ethos and values of the school relate to the wider community and world.

- Almost all children behave very well. Relationships in the school are strong, both between staff and children and among children and their peers. Staff manage incidents of children displaying dysregulated behaviour well. The supportive staff team encourage children to manage their emotions effectively using a range of appropriate strategies. Overall, staff's focus on promoting children's rights and positive behaviour has a positive impact on sustaining most children's engagement in learning. The learning environment is calm, inclusive and well organised.

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- Senior leaders have developed and led a well-structured approach to improving learning, teaching and assessment. They ensure provision of well-planned professional learning is building the capacity of staff to deliver high-quality learning and teaching. Almost all staff embrace opportunities to develop their own leadership of learning and teaching through engagement in professional enquiry projects. For example, last session, staff implemented a project that successfully accelerated the pace of learning in numeracy for an identified group of children. This strengthening culture of professional curiosity, led well by senior leaders, is helping to develop a whole school, consistent understanding of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.

- Teachers have clear routines in place that help children settle quickly to learning. In most lessons, teacher's explanations of learning are clear. Most children understand the purpose of their learning and know if they have been successful. In almost all lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check children's knowledge and understanding. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to support children to think more deeply about a topic. Although most lessons are well matched to children's needs, a minority of children would benefit from further challenge in their learning. Children are increasingly developing independence in their learning. Further strengthening this remains a key area for development this session.

- Teachers use a range of digital technologies well to enrich the learning experience in most lessons. Most children apply their digital skills appropriately, using a range of platforms and software confidently for a variety of purposes. Children in receipt of additional support, use assistive technologies well, such as talk to text, to remove barriers to learning. The introduction of a digital approach to support children to set individualised learning targets and record their progress is at an early stage of development.

- All teachers implement a well-considered assessment calendar to measure children's progress in learning at key points across the year. Senior leaders have reviewed appropriately the timing of key assessments to ensure they better inform planned learning and accelerate children's progress. Most teachers use an appropriate range of formative, summative and diagnostic assessments to inform their professional judgement. They have developed their provision of helpful verbal and written feedback, particularly in writing. Teachers are now well-placed to apply this practice to improve the quality of feedback in other areas of the curriculum.

- Teachers work effectively in trios, both within the school and across the learning community to develop a shared understanding of national expectations. This approach has, over the past three years, successfully increased teacher's confidence in their assessment of writing. Teachers are increasingly aware of children's progression through and beyond attainment levels. They welcome the professional support and challenge that engagement in moderation activity provides. This session's renewed focus on reading provides an ideal opportunity to apply the same level of rigour to assessing children's progress in reading.

- Teachers plan appropriately for the long, medium and short-term informed by appropriate progressive curriculum pathways. Most teachers plan learning experiences which are creative, interesting and well matched to children's needs. They ensure that assessment is integral to planning. At a few stages, teachers seek the views of children and use their responses to inform planning. This practice should now be further developed across the school.

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- Children are receiving their entitlement to learning other languages in line with the 1+2 languages policy. They learn French as their first language, and experience Spanish, German and British Sign Language through topic work.

- Senior leaders implement robust tracking and monitoring systems that are well understood and used consistently by teaching and support staff. Senior leaders meet with teachers termly to discuss all children's progress, including those in receipt of additional support, in line with planned learning. They use these meetings well to inform appropriate pace and challenge in learning. These discussions support the timely identification of needs, the impact of interventions and the identification of next steps.

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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.

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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

- Most children attain, and a few children exceed, national expectations in both literacy and numeracy. Attainment is highest in listening and talking, with almost all children attaining expected levels. Most children attain expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy, with the exception of second level writing. The majority of children attain second level writing. Across all stages, few children are capable of achieving more.

- Children in receipt of additional support make good progress against individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, almost all children make good progress in literacy. A few children make very good progress.

  Almost all children speak confidently and respectfully to each other. They build appropriately on the contributions of others in discussions and group work. They present their opinions clearly. Teacher's effective application of well-planned professional learning and moderation has led to an increase in children's writing skills across the school. Almost all children are now confident to discuss their writing, how it has improved and their next steps in learning. Staff should, as planned, strengthen their understanding of reading pedagogy to further raise attainment in reading.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children make very good progress.

- Children are most engaged in numeracy and mathematics when they have opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts and other areas of learning, such as topic work. For example, children apply their knowledge of three-dimensional objects to create a robust structure that meets a set of specific criteria. Children in P7 speak confidently about how they apply a range of numerical and mathematical strategies when using their 'games room'. They describe their consideration of angles when playing pool, and the calculations required when playing darts. Younger children are less confident when talking about money and data handling.

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Attainment over time

- Senior leaders use whole school tracking systems very effectively to regularly monitor and analyse children's progress in literacy and numeracy over time. Teacher's increasing confidence in their understanding of data, and in their professional judgement, further enhance the impact of this tracking process. Senior leaders support teachers' increasingly consistent use of a 'fact, story, action' approach. This strengthens teachers' ability to understand and address dips in attainment, enabling them to improve attainment over time. Levels of attainment in numeracy have been consistently above both local and national averages since 2020/21. Overall attainment in literacy has increased over time and, since 2023/24, sits above local and national averages. Over the past three years, teachers' successful implementation of systematic improvement strategies has resulted in a 10% increase in the overall attainment in writing. Staff have correctly identified the need to develop further their approach to raising attainment in reading and further develop children's love of reading.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Almost all children have the opportunity to play an active role in the wider life of the school through their involvement in 'swarms' (pupil voice groups). These groups include opportunities to become Young Leaders of Learning, Digital Wizards and Young Sports Leaders. Children develop and apply a range of skills through their participation in 'swarms'. This results in them feeling empowered to lead change within the school and their local community. Staff support children well to recognise how these activities develop their confidence, responsibility and citizenship using the attractive 'Biggar Banner'. Staff highlight the connections between these and the school values and children's rights. Children are becoming increasingly confident in identifying the skills they are developing through a broad range of wider acheivement activity. There is potential for children to capture more clearly the impact of their 'swarm' activities in the floorbooks used to record each group's activity.

- Strong partnership working enhances opportunities for children to become personally and socially adept. Children develop a range of skills and attributes through their participation in a wide rage of activities. Their involvement in the Biggar Little Festival promotes and celebrates children's art work within the community. Local shopkeepers provide opportunities for children to apply their French language skills in meaningful contexts through their engagement with Bonjour Biggar. Well-established partnership working with the local hospital and care homes supports intergenerational working, developing children's inter-personal and communication skills. With the support of the Parent Council, children develop enterprise skills, through business development work, such as last session's 'pitch it project'.These projects enable children to innovate and solve problems in real-life contexts.

- Staff use a range of methods to celebrate children's success and achievements. They promote children's self-belief and raise aspirations, reinforcing the school's motto; Believe, Prepare, Suceed. Events such as the annual Biggar's Got Talent show and Burns competition provide opportunities for children to showcase their talents to a wider audience. Staff track children's participation in extra-curricular clubs and activities and use this to identify children at risk of missing out. Almost all children engage in wider achievement activity, either within or outwith school. The majority of children took part in a school lunchtime or after-school club in 2025/26. Staff have begun to implement a new digital approach to pupil profiling. This has the potential to develop further children's ability to set personal wider achievement targets and capture the progressive development of skills.

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Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and most staff have a strong knowledge and understanding of children and families. They use this well to inform their approach to ensuring equity of experience and opportunity. Potential barriers to participation, such as transport costs to activities like swimming and the P7 residential, are addressed. Pupil Equity Funding is used appropriately to enhance staffing to provide targeted support for identified groups and individuals. This leads to improved progress for the individuals involved. Children respond positively to working within the Sunshine Room, which has been established to provide a more nurturing learning environment. Children are more willing and able to sustain their engagement in learning activities as a result.

- Senior leaders, teachers and support staff track carefully the progress and attendance of all children, particularly those who are most disadvantaged. The overall attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged is narrower in numeracy than in literacy. School data demonstrates progress towards narrowing the attainment gap in both numeracy and literacy. Staff should sustain this focus to further improve the attendance of this identified group of children which is 4% lower than that of their peers.

- Staff provide appropriate individualised support to remove barriers to learning and enhance progress. As a result, almost all identified children are making appropriate progress in relation to their individual learning targets. Moving forward, staff should consider how this progress can be accelerated further.

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Other relevant evidence

- Overall attendance for academic year 2025/26 was 95.2%. This demonstrates a year-on-year improvement over the past three years. Attendance levels are consistently in line with the local authority and national averages. Senior leaders employ effective systems and processes to implement local authority policies and procedures and monitor children's attendance and late-coming. Children whose attendance falls below 90% are automatically placed on the school's attendance monitoring system. Staff take appropriate and timely action to support children and families to improve attendance. The impact of poor attendance and lateness on children's learning is exemplified for parents in the school's newsletters, helping them to make informed choices. As a result, the number of children with absence below 90% has decreased significantly and is now less than half the local authority average. There are no children on part-time timetables and there have been no exclusions in the last two years.

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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.

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