

Summarised inspection findings

Banton Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

4 November 2025

Key contextual information

Banton Primary School is a non-denominational, small rural school in the village of Banton in North Lanarkshire. At the time of inspection, 43 children were organised across three multi-composite classes of P1-2, P3-4 and P5-7. The headteacher has been in post for 10 years. This is a shared headship with another local rural school. The headteacher is supported by a principal teacher and two class teachers. The principal teacher has a class commitment of three days each week. Learning is supported by the equivalent of two full-time learning assistants.

The school reports that approximately 41% of children across the school require additional support with their learning. Placing requests account for 41% of the school roll. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 7. Approximately 17% of children are registered for free school meals.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Most staff work well together with children to promote a climate of positive relationships. Most children interact well with each other and are polite to staff and visitors. Most staff are committed to embedding children's rights and this can be seen in classroom and playground charters. Staff refer to the school's values of respect, responsible, honest and kind during lessons. As a result most children know them well. Most children across the school behave well. The headteacher and staff need to develop further a whole school approach to nurture to better meet children's needs. In doing this, they would be able to use a consistent approach to support children who demonstrate dysregulated behaviour.
- In the majority of classes, children participate well in activities and are engaged in their learning as a result of well-paced and carefully considered tasks. However, this is not yet of a consistently high-quality across the school. In a few lessons, children's learning is overly teacher led, the pace is slow and too much time is allocated to teachers' explanations. As a result, a minority of children become disengaged.
- The majority of staff support children effectively, who require additional support with their learning. A few children use digital devices to help them access materials appropriate to their needs. In most lessons, a few children would benefit from greater levels of challenge in their learning. The headteacher should now provide clearer direction to how the school supports children with barriers to their learning. This should include a review of staff deployment to better meet children's needs and a clearer focus on learning.
- Teachers in the majority of lessons provide clear explanations and instructions. They share with children the purpose of learning and how they can demonstrate that they have been successful. In a few lessons, children are involved in creating the measures of success with

staff. In a few lessons, teachers are beginning to share effectively ongoing verbal and written feedback based on the agreed measures of success. This is helping children to understand how successful they have been and to know their next steps in learning. Teachers need now to have higher expectations of children's writing.

- Children at the early stages are not yet fully benefiting from purposeful play. As part of their professional learning, staff should engage fully with national guidance on play. The headteacher should take steps to support staff to better understand the role of the adult in play. Staff should continue to ensure they provide learning through play that challenges and supports all children to engage them in learning.
- Teachers are making greater use of the school's context to provide outdoor learning experiences for children. Children enjoy spending time outdoors increasing their understanding of the woodland and the surrounding countryside. They enjoy looking after the beehive and learning about the role of bees in the environment. Children have a termly learn outdoors day to apply their skills beyond the classroom. The headteacher should now work with staff and the local community to develop a planned and progressive approach to outdoor learning.
- All teachers use electronic whiteboards effectively to display learning and for presentations, activities and games. In the majority of lessons, staff make good use of digital technology to enrich and support children's learning. Children use an online resource well, for example, when researching topics, to consolidate learning in mathematics and help to develop their writing skills. Older children are particularly skilled in using a number of applications to support their learning. The headteacher and staff should now build on this to ensure that children's digital literacy skills are developed in a planned and progressive way.
- Across the school, teachers are beginning to use a range of approaches to measure children's progress in learning. This includes National Standardised Assessments and ongoing diagnostic assessments. Teachers use this assessment data to support their professional judgements of achievement of a level. They are developing their confidence in interpreting the data available to them. They participate in moderation opportunities with colleagues in other schools to help develop accuracy in their judgements of children's attainment. Staff should continue to engage in moderation activities to develop further their knowledge of national standards. Teachers should ensure that assessment data is used effectively to support planning appropriate next steps in children's learning.
- Teachers plan learning using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes across all curricular areas. This is supported by local authority progression pathways. The headteacher needs to develop approaches to planning, tracking and monitoring further. This should ensure the needs of all children are being met effectively. This includes, for example, children who require additional support in their learning. The headteacher should support staff to plan more effectively to meet individual children's learning needs. Staff should involve parents and children in setting measurable learning targets for children which are reviewed regularly. This should help staff evidence the progress children are making against their individual learning targets.
- Staff track children's progress in class using a personalised support tracker. They transfer this information to the whole school tracker. As a result, teachers are improving their use of data to inform next steps. The headteacher and staff meet termly to discuss children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff use these meetings to identify children requiring interventions to support their learning. These meetings now need to be more robust and rigorous to ensure they are used effectively to raise attainment.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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

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

- As this is a small school with three multi-stage composite classes, only general statements about progress have been used. This is because of the very small numbers of children at each stage and to ensure children's anonymity.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children across the school have achieved, or are on track to achieve, expected levels of attainment in literacy. Most have achieved, or are on track to achieve, expected levels of attainment in numeracy. A minority of children are capable of making greater progress in their learning.
- Staff are unable to provide clear evidence of the progress being made by children who require additional support with their learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress in literacy and English is satisfactory. A few children are making good progress.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen well to their teachers and peers. Younger children ask relevant questions and answer other's questions appropriately. A few children become disengaged when listening during whole class activities and need support to engage in their learning. The majority of older children engage well with each other and adults in discussion. When working in small groups, older children build on each other's ideas by asking questions or offering suggestions. Older children are demonstrating skills in presenting their learning to others using online presentations. A majority of children need to improve their skills in turn taking in group discussions.

Reading

- The majority of younger children read familiar texts with ease. They are beginning to use decoding skills well to help them read unfamiliar words. However, younger children would benefit from developing reading skills at an increased pace. The majority of older children explain well how they would use the author and blurb to help them make decisions about which book to choose to read. They read clearly and use expression well to enhance their reading. Older children need to develop their skills in reading for understanding and finding the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Writing

- The majority of younger children are beginning to form letters legibly. They are beginning to write simple sentences about their experiences. They need to practise their writing skills more

regularly. Children would benefit from writing more frequently through play. The majority of older children create interesting characters and settings to write imaginative stories and persuasive texts. They write for a range of purposes. Across the school, children need to write more regularly extended pieces of writing. They need to develop a fuller understanding of grammar appropriate to their age and stage of learning.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are capable of achieving more.

Number, money and measure

- Most younger children order numbers to 100 and identify the number before and after correctly. They are developing their confidence in adding and subtracting numbers within 20. As children progress through the school, they identify confidently the place value of digits within numbers to 1000. They need to be supported to develop their ability to solve two-step problems and calculate change from a given amount. Most older children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers to 100,000 confidently. They round numbers to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. Most older children order, simplify and compare fractions with increasing confidence. They are less confident calculating fractions of a whole number. Older children need more opportunities to improve their ability to apply number processes to word problems.

Shape, position and movement

- Most younger children name and discuss features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects successfully, appropriate to their age and stage. Younger children understand and use correctly the language of position, including in front, behind, forwards and backwards. Most older children describe angles accurately using appropriate language, such as acute, obtuse and reflex. They are less confident discussing the relationship between 3D objects and their nets. They need to practice using mathematical vocabulary to describe the properties of circles and triangles.

Information handling

- Most younger children match and sort items well by colour, size, and shape. Most older children extract key information and answer questions correctly from a range of graphs and tables. All children need opportunities to practise applying data and analysis skills regularly in a wide range of real-life and rich contexts including the use of digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The small numbers of children in each year group means that differences in attainment can have a disproportionate impact on identifying patterns and trends in attainment. The headteacher and teachers regularly review the attainment of individual children in literacy and numeracy as they progress through the school. This data does not illustrate attainment over time effectively for all children. The headteacher should support staff to improve the analysis of assessment information over time. Staff should develop a clearer focus on evidencing how they are measuring and improving children's progress. Overall, attainment is satisfactory and there is capacity for improvement.
- Attendance over recent years has remained positive. Almost all children's attendance is very high, and overall attendance is 95.4% which is above the national average. The headteacher tracks the attendance of all children regularly and is aware of all reasons for absence. A few children have absences of 10% and more. Working closely with parents, the headteacher acts promptly, following local authority guidance, to address any issues relating to low attendance. There are no children on part time timetables. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated in a variety of ways. These include school displays, sharing learning through a school online newsletter and assemblies. Children gain confidence and achieve success within and out of school, for example, through activities such as sporting events and arts and culture activities. Children play an active role within their school and local community. This includes ongoing partnerships with a local business centre, bowling club and a community organisation 'The Swan'. This is supporting children to be successful and confident in applying their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. All children have leadership roles and responsibilities. They are leading on aspects of digital learning, children's rights and global citizenship across the school. This is supporting children to develop as effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- The headteacher and staff track children's achievements and participation in clubs and activities. Staff are aware of children at risk of missing out and target support for those children not participating in achievements. Staff should now discuss and track the skills children are gaining from their achievements and link these to skills for learning, life and work. This should help children to make links between their achievements, learning and progress.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff know children and their families well. They are aware of the socio-economic context of the school community. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide universal support across the school. The headteacher uses PEF to enhance staffing to reduce class sizes. Staff plan a range of interventions and support for a range of children to address their barriers to learning. The headteacher should now use consistent and clearly defined measures to evidence the impact of PEF interventions on children's progress. This should support all staff to make informed evaluations about how well targeted approaches accelerate the progress of identified children.
- Staff work well with the community to identify areas to reduce the cost of the school day. They provide helpful initiatives, such as a uniform bank. They work closely with the Parent Council who carry out fundraising. This fundraising ensures that school trips are subsidised where needed. This ensures that no child misses out because of financial restrictions.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education per week.
- Children at all stages of the school learn French. Staff should now develop more sustainable approaches to languages to ensure older children receive their full entitlement to 1+2 languages.
- The headteacher consults with parents about the use of Pupil Equity Funding.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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.