

Summarised inspection findings

Netherton Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

8 September 2026

Key contextual information

Netherton Primary is a non-denominational school serving the town of Wishaw, North Lanarkshire. The headteacher has been in post since 2018. She is supported by a full time equivalent principal teacher, which is shared by two part-time post holders. One has only recently taken up post. The school roll is 197 children, split across eight classes, with three in a composite arrangement.

Thirty seven percent of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one to three. Twenty eight percent of children live in SIMD deciles four to six and 35% of children live in SIMD deciles seven to nine. In September 2024, the school reported that 16% of children had an identified additional support need. Staff report that this has increased to 31% of children since that date, which brings the number in line with national averages. The school has experienced challenges over the recent period with staff absence and changes to staffing.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak
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 foster positive and caring relationships with children. This supports a calm and welcoming learning environment. Most children interact respectfully with each other and with staff. They encourage and help their peers eagerly during lessons and group work. Children are articulate, well-mannered and enthusiastic. Staff establish well-organised classrooms, providing a welcoming atmosphere for children. They create attractive wall displays that are used well by staff to prompt children as part of their learning. They also use displays to celebrate children’s achievements and positive pieces of work.
- Staff are rightly proud of the progress they have made in recent years to create a more settled learning environment. Most children demonstrate positive behaviours and a majority follow instructions well. Staff work with children to create well-considered class and playground charters, founded in children’s rights and highlighting clear expectations of each individual. On occasion, a few children become distracted and engage in low-level, off-task behaviours. This includes not following instructions or talking during quiet tasks. Teachers should continue to develop ways to motivate and engage these children in learning more effectively.
- In a minority of lessons, children demonstrate high levels of engagement when learning is appropriately challenging and the pace of learning is matched well to their ability. Across the school, most children are motivated effectively by paired and group work activities. However, a majority of learning is overly teacher-led, with all children completing the same activities, at

the same pace. This approach leads to children being passive in their learning. All staff should extend the use of rich contexts for learning to provide motivating and enjoyable experiences for all children.

- A majority of teachers need to ensure they plan learning that aligns more closely with the needs and abilities of all children. They need to maximise learning time by having greater expectations of what children are capable of achieving. They should avoid low-level tasks, such as copying or completing worksheets, which do not provide sufficient challenge. A majority of children require increased pace in their learning to maximise their progress. A significant minority of children across the school require increased challenge in their learning.
- Teachers are at the early stages of developing children's role in planning learning. They support children to identify what they know and would like to know for topic-based activity. They should extend meaningful opportunities for children to exercise personalisation and choice, and to lead aspects of learning.
- Teachers have engaged in professional learning relating to play-based pedagogy. They are beginning to reflect on how to adapt the learning environment to support meaningful play for children in P1. This work is at a very early stage and there is a need to develop the approach and environment further. Senior leaders need to provide clearer support and direction on the development of purposeful play at the early stages of the school.
- The quality of teaching across the school is not yet of a consistently high standard. A few teachers provide effective teaching. Staff recognise the need to develop consistent approaches to be adopted by all. They have engaged well with recent professional learning provided by the local authority exploring pedagogy. The headteacher now needs to work with staff to agree the features of high-quality learning, teaching and assessment. Approaches should be informed by the views and experiences of children, and the wider school community.
- Teachers are developing more consistent classroom routines to help children to focus on learning. Almost all teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. All teachers share learning intentions and success criteria routinely. However, this only supports a minority of children to understand well the purpose of learning and measures of success. Most teachers should ensure success criteria links explicitly to national Benchmarks. They should ensure measures of success focus on learning and not completing tasks. Most teachers use success criteria well in literacy to review children's progress when completing periods of learning.
- Most staff use questioning well to recap prior learning and to check for understanding. A few teachers use higher-order questions skilfully to encourage children to think deeply about their learning. This practice should be shared widely and embedded across the school.
- Most teachers offer children individual and specific feedback on their literacy work. This is helping children to recognise what they are doing well and to consider their next steps in learning. Teachers should extend these approaches to other curricular areas. Importantly, they now need to support children to act on feedback, by applying routinely what they learned to improve their work. Almost all children would benefit from regular learner conversations with teachers to set and then review targets for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These targets should be shared with parents, to strengthen how they support learning at home. A significant number of parents request more regular feedback on their child's progress.

- Almost all teachers use a range of assessments to measure children's progress. These assessments includes regular standardised and summative assessments, and a few helpful formative strategies, such as children completing self- and peer- assessment. There is not yet a whole-school approach to assessment. This means approaches across the school are not consistently effective. For example, a majority of teachers over-assess children or use assessments that do not align sufficiently well with national Benchmarks. A majority of teachers do not use assessments consistently to inform children's next steps in learning. Teachers undertake a few assessments too late in the year, when they do not have sufficient time to support further progress in learning. Senior leaders need to implement a coherent, effective approach to assessment.
- A majority of teachers are beginning to use assessment data better to inform their judgement of learner progress. This has been supported by recent professional learning and a few cluster moderation events provided by the local authority. Teachers are not routinely engaging in moderation activities with stage partners and with teachers across the school. It is important that teachers continue to improve their use of assessment, engage in regular moderation in and outwith school, and access further professional learning on the moderation cycle. This should help teacher professional judgements to become increasingly more reliable and robust.
- The headteacher meets with teachers termly to discuss the planning of learning and to track the progress of children. This approach is not yet robust and is not supporting improved outcomes for children. The headteacher needs to ensure meetings involve the interrogation of high-quality data to identify children who are off track. They should systematically record and review actions to ensure children make progress, as a result. Importantly, the process needs to be used to identify, implement and evaluate interventions used to accelerate children's progress. The headteacher and teachers require support from the local authority to ensure they are able to use data more meaningfully. The headteacher should develop a clear strategy to raise the attainment of individual, groups and cohorts of children across the school.
- Teachers share their long-term planning for learning on a digital platform accessible by all staff. All teachers use progression pathways relating to literacy and numeracy and a few other curricular areas to inform their planning. However, teachers' approaches to planning learning are varied and inconsistent across the school. Senior leaders should continue, as planned, to implement a consistent and clear approach to planning learning in the short, medium and long term. This should focus on ensuring children's learning across the curriculum is progressive, relevant and based on Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes.
- There is an urgent need to improve the strategic leadership of learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers are not yet clear on the strategic approach to developing high-quality learning and teaching across the school. Senior leaders need to develop robust approaches to quality assure learner experiences. This should support staff to measure the impact of improvements on children. It should help them to identify future improvement priorities based on reliable evidence.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, with areas of weakness. Staff have undergone recent professional learning and a few moderation activities with colleagues across the cluster. This work is helping to improve the reliability of teacher judgements on the attainment of children in the recent year. However, there remains a need for further work to ensure data provided is fully robust and reliable.
- At early level, a majority of children achieve expected levels in literacy and most children in numeracy. For second level, most children achieve expected levels in literacy and a majority in numeracy. Senior leaders and staff need to improve the progress of children at first level. There are important gaps in a majority of children's knowledge. Around half of children at first level achieve expected levels of literacy and a minority achieve in numeracy. A majority of children with additional support needs are capable of making better progress. They require increased support and targeted planning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, the majority of children make satisfactory progress in literacy and English. There are a significant minority of children who should be making further progress.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children ask and answer questions about a text they know well. A minority need to develop their turn-taking skills and ability to respond to others appropriately. At first level, a majority of children explain the main ideas of a text well and highlight relevant information in a clear and logical way. They should continue to build on their communication skills and expand their vocabulary. At second level, most children respond appropriately to a range of questions. At first and second level, children need to develop their ability to engage in discussions and debates on a range of challenging topics to improve their oratory skills further.

Reading

- Most children select texts from their well-stocked class library to read during lessons. They would benefit from being able to take these books home to continue reading on their own or with families. This would support further their enthusiasm and interest in reading independently. Most children engage enthusiastically with class novels.
- At early level, a majority of children read aloud familiar text and use sounds and patterns to decode words. At first level, a majority of children answer literal questions about a text but are

not yet confident with inferential questions. At first and second level, a majority of children read with fluency. They speak confidently about their favourite authors and share thoughts and feelings about a book. At second level, most children read with appropriate pace and summarise and make predictions about a text accurately. Across the school, children need to develop their higher-order comprehension skills using text appropriate to their level of ability.

Writing

- At early level, a majority of children form letters well and are developing their use of capital letters and full stops for a sentence. At first level, a majority of children demonstrate a basic understanding of sentence structure and parts of speech. They should extend their use of connectives and organise their writing more clearly into paragraphs. At second level, a majority of children identify and apply key features of different genres and select relevant information to support their writing. They need more support to identify accurately key grammatical features such as nouns, adjectives and adverbs within sentences. Teachers should develop a more consistent and progressive approach to teaching grammar across the school. Children do not yet understand and apply grammatical rules consistently.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Across early and second level, a majority of children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children at first level need further support to ensure they make appropriate progress in their learning. Across the school, a minority of children should be making better progress with their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count confidently forward and backwards to 20. A minority of children need support to double numbers up to 10. At first level, a majority of children write in sequence whole numbers to 1000. A minority of children solve addition and subtraction problems to three digits confidently. A majority of children need help to round numbers to the 100. At second level, most children order numbers to one million successfully, including decimal numbers. They understand place value well and a majority add and subtract numbers to a thousand. Most children have not yet developed a recall of mental times tables, relying on written strategies or concrete materials. This slows down their ability to use tables to tackle problems. At first and second level, children's speed of mental agility is too slow and there are gaps in their knowledge. Teachers should revisit regularly and consolidate key concepts to strengthen children's understanding and application.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school, most children name and label parts of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using appropriate vocabulary relevant to their age and stage. At early level, a few children need more help to identify a line of symmetry in a simple shape. At first level, most children find right angles in shapes successfully. They are less confident in plotting reference points on two figure grids. At second level, most children use correct mathematical language to describe angles. However, most children are not yet confident in measuring these angles. They need more help to understand radius and diameter fully.

Information handling

- At early level, most children collect and sort objects correctly for different purposes. They are beginning to display data pictorially. At first level, children use tally marks correctly to gather and record information. They are not yet able to transfer information into a graph. At second

level, most children are skilled in using the language of probability to describe the likelihood of events. They are confident in collecting, presenting and displaying data. They are not yet able to describe how to use these skills in real-life situations.

Attainment over time

- There are important weaknesses in the reliability of the school's attainment data. Data previously reported by the school overestimated children's attainment.
- The school does not currently have a coherent strategy to raise the attainment and achievement of children. The headteacher needs to develop a strategic approach to improving outcomes for children. Senior leaders should develop a monitoring and tracking system that is consistently applied and that provides reliable data on children's progress. They should work with staff to implement an approach that ensures learners who are off track in their learning are identified promptly with appropriate action taken. The headteacher should develop a raising attainment strategy. This will help to emphasise the roles and responsibilities of all members of the school community in raising attainment.
- Staff should consider how they evidence progress of children requiring additional support with learning. Staff should systematically measure children's progress against their targets and milestones. This should help to demonstrate better children's progress over time.
- In 2024/25, the school's attendance was 93.1%, in line with the national average. Attendance has declined over the last year and currently sits at 91.1%. A minority of children are persistently absent with attendance below 90%. A few children are significantly absent with attendance below 50%. Staff maintain accurate attendance records and follow local authority policies and procedures. They send letters and conduct a few home visits. This approach is not yet supporting improvements in attendance for a few children and families. Senior leaders should continue to develop interventions used to address persistent absence from school. No children have been excluded from the school in recent years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Almost all children in P7 and a minority of children across other stages access leadership roles, such as house captains and running sports clubs for younger peers. These children develop skills such as teamwork and communication from their involvement. A minority of children develop presentation skills by leading workshops for parents. Children across the school enjoy raising funds for charity and develop social awareness as a result. Children's leadership skills should be developed further through purposeful and challenging roles. Importantly, a number of children express a desire to make a more meaningful contribution to implementing change and improvement across the school.
- Most children benefit from a wide range of clubs, including football, badminton, netball and cheerleading, which support achievements beyond the classroom. Changes in staff and staff absence impact on the consistency of the clubs on offer to children. Staff celebrate children's achievements in and outwith school through assemblies and awards. A few teachers track children's participation and achievements. Senior leaders should develop a whole-school approach to tracking children's participation in achievements. This would allow teachers to identify those who need more support to access opportunities available.

Equity for all learners

- Most staff understand the social and economic context of the school community. A few children improved their literacy skills through their involvement in a cluster support initiative. However, there is not a strategic approach to closing the poverty related attainment gap. All staff should work together to develop approaches in the classroom to accelerate the progress of children impacted by inequity.
- The headteacher developed a detailed plan on the spend of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). However, staffing constraints meant this was not implemented. The headteacher should work with the local authority to develop further the approach of planning, implementing and evaluating the use of PEF. This includes a clearer approach to measuring the impact of PEF on positive outcomes for children impacted by socio-economic deprivation. They must also extend the involvement of stakeholders in planning for PEF spend, including the Parent Council.

Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher needs to review approaches to communication at all levels. They need to ensure that communication is regular, clear and effective. They should work with parents to develop a communication strategy. This should help parents to understand how they receive different information from the school and what they can expect when they contact the school to address issues of concern.
- Children across all stages have regular French lessons. Children in P6 adopt the role of French Ambassadors and deliver lessons to their younger peers. This is helping most children to recognise and use simple words and phrases. Children from P4 to P7 also have Spanish lessons. Staff should continue to develop children's learning experiences in Spanish to ensure they are progressive and relevant.
- All children receive their entitlement to two-hours per week of high-quality physical education. They particularly enjoy opportunities to develop their practical skills while participating in sport across the extensive school grounds.
- Children learn about Christianity and other world religions through the religious and moral education programme. Staff identify the need to develop the curriculum further to ensure it builds successfully on children's prior learning. Staff work well with a local chaplain. He supports children to explore belief and celebrations through talks and visits from the Gospel Hall.

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.