

Summarised inspection findings

Fair Isle Primary School

Fife Council

16 September 2025

Key contextual information

Fair Isle Primary School is a non-denominational primary school serving the Templehall area of Kirkcaldy. At the time of inspection, the school roll consisted of 352 children across 13 classes. The headteacher has been in post for seven years and is supported by two depute headteachers and two acting principal teachers.

The majority of children are registered for free school meals. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 to 3. Children's attendance is in line with the national average and exclusions have reduced from last year. The school reported that approximately one-fifth of children require additional support with their learning and one fifth of children have English as an additional language.

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 create and maintain a welcoming and positive inclusive ethos throughout the school. Staff support children well to understand the school values that are underpinned by effective pupil leadership skills. For example, children are encouraged to be responsible by being proactive in their learning. Staff ensure school assemblies and regular classroom discussions help remind children of these values. Children can confidently talk about what the values mean and how they demonstrate them in school. Staff use a clear leadership framework to help children understand how they can live out these values by taking increasing responsibility for their own learning. They also support children to lead and support others as they move through the school.
- Relationships between staff and children are warm and respectful. Children are proud of their school and most children feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Most staff have clear expectations of children's behaviour resulting in most children behaving well. Staff use a variety of strategies to support a few children to access learning and manage relationships, when required. Senior leaders and staff should now focus on ensuring children understand their rights.
- Senior leaders and staff have worked closely together to develop a learning and teaching policy. Staff review this policy regularly. This is helping staff to develop a consistent approach to teaching and learning. Staff have agreed and use a four-part structure to lessons. This structure is central to teaching and plenary sessions, connecting what children need to do to be successful and linking learning to the school values and skills for learning, life and work. Staff are helping children to be clear about what they are learning and the link with their skills development. Teachers now need to reduce the amount of time they spend explaining learning at the start of lessons. This should help to maximise learning time and ensure that children remain focused on what it is they are learning. In almost all lessons, teachers ensure that the

purpose of learning is clear. Teachers and children work together to identify what success in learning will look like. Teachers use this approach consistently across all classes, ensuring children are involved in the learning process.

- Most teachers provide effective verbal or written feedback to children. This supports children to understand what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. For example, teachers give focused feedback on key writing skills, helping children clearly understand how to develop and improve their writing. As identified by senior leaders, staff should continue to develop the use of children's self- and peer-assessment, which will help children further understand their progress and how to improve.
- Most children work well independently, in pairs and in small groups. In most lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations about learning are clear and they use questioning appropriately to check for understanding. Teachers should now focus on ensuring learning is well matched to the needs of all children. This should particularly benefit those children who require more challenge in their learning.
- Across the school, staff have developed a variety of stimulating environments which are used well to support children's learning and engagement. This is helping to ensure that most children remain engaged in learning. Staff provide calm areas where children can regulate their emotions and re-engage with learning when ready. This reduces incidents and promotes positive behaviour.
- Staff have developed an outdoor garden area that provides opportunities for children to learn through real-life experiences. As a result, children are developing practical skills and a deeper understanding of how things grow. As recognised by senior leaders, staff should develop a progressive, outdoor learning framework. This will help children better recognise the skills they are developing and build on them progressively over time.
- Children engage with a variety of digital technology for a range of purposes. For example, children confidently use tablets to undertake research. Older children share their learning with parents through a digital platform. Children in P1 use programmable toys to explore positional language. Teachers' effective use of technology helps to support children's independence and motivation to learn. Senior leaders and staff should, as planned, review how digital technologies can be used more effectively across all stages of the school.
- Teachers at the early level have worked together well to develop approaches to play. They use space effectively to provide a stimulating learning environment which supports children to build on and extend their learning. Teachers have taken part in professional learning which is enhancing their understanding of play pedagogy. Teachers should now develop further their understanding of the role of the adult within play, providing a better balance of child led, teacher led and adult-directed activities.
- Working collaboratively, all teachers have developed a clear assessment calendar that supports consistency in their assessment approaches across the school. Teachers use a range of ongoing, summative, and diagnostic assessments, to evaluate children's knowledge and understanding. In the majority of classes, teachers use formative assessment strategies effectively, including clear steps to success, to help children review their learning. Teachers have begun to plan high-quality assessments in relevant and meaningful contexts. This is beginning to support more effective evaluation of how well children apply their learning. Teachers should continue to develop these approaches to enhance further their ability to identify and plan appropriate next steps in learning.

- All teachers engage regularly in moderation activities, supported by a helpful bank of questions developed by senior leaders. Teachers in P1 and P7 work collaboratively with other establishments within the cluster to moderate standards. Senior leaders have rightly identified that historical professional judgements were inaccurate. Through strengthening assessment practices and use of national Benchmarks, teachers are now beginning to make more valid and reliable judgements. As a result, assessment and tracking of learners' progress has become stronger, positioning the school well to monitor and raise attainment in the future. Staff have made a positive start to tracking children's progress in other areas of the curriculum beyond literacy and numeracy.
- All teachers use a range of long term and medium-term plans well to plan children's learning. They make effective use of progression pathways linked to CfE experiences and outcomes in all areas of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet three times a year to review and monitor children's progress. This helps support the identification of next steps in children's learning. They now need to streamline the data they collect to analyse more effectively. They also need to develop a clear whole-school overview of what is working well, to better understand the impact of their targeted interventions.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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 are making good progress, with a few making very good progress. A minority of children are not meeting expected standards and need to be challenged more. In P1, the majority of children have achieved national standards in literacy and numeracy. In P4, most children achieved first level in reading and listening and talking. The majority have achieved national standards in numeracy and writing. At P7, the majority of children have achieved second level in both literacy and numeracy. Staff have taken effective steps to address lower attainment in writing and numeracy, which has had a positive impact on children's progress.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress against their individual targets. A minority of children are making accelerated progress to meet national expectations.

Attainment in literacy and English

- A majority of children at early and second level, and most children at first level, make good progress in reading, listening and talking. A majority of children at all levels make good progress in writing. A few children are making very good progress in all aspects of literacy.

Talking and listening

- Children who have achieved early level, join in songs and rhymes and recount experiences. They need support to listen and respond to others appropriately. Children who have achieved first level, take turns, share opinions and engage in discussions successfully. Children who have achieved second level, ask and answer literal and evaluative questions. They share ideas respectfully, building on others' contributions. Children at first and second level, need to develop more confidence when speaking to different audiences.

Reading

- Children who have achieved early level, use their knowledge of sounds to recognise words and read familiar words in context. They relate texts to their own experiences. They should develop further their understanding of rhyme. Children who achieved first level, read aloud familiar texts with fluency. They should now develop further their understanding of the features of non-fiction texts. Children who achieved second level, explain their preferences for particular authors and are aware of language features such as metaphors and similes. They are less sure about how authors engage readers through the use of emotive language.

Writing

- Children who have achieved early level, understand the need to leave a space between words. They know to use a full stop and capital letter to punctuate a sentence. They need more practice writing sentences independently, forming their letters correctly and using their

knowledge of phonics to sound out words. Children who have achieved first level, use a range of connectives to make interesting sentences. They need to improve their spelling of common words. Children who have achieved second level include relevant information when writing reports, biographies and procedural texts. They structure their writing well.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics, with a few making very good progress. They show strong mental agility and a sound understanding of number and number processes. Most children at all levels make good progress in number, money and measure. In shape, position and movement, almost all at second level, most at first level, and the majority at early level make good progress. Most children across all levels also make good progress in information handling.

Number, money and measure

- Children who have achieved early level are developing well their ability to add and subtract within 10 and beyond. A few have sharp recall of simple number facts and doubles. Continued practice should strengthen these skills for all learners. Children who have achieved first level are skilled at generating simple equivalent fractions. They convert accurately money to pounds and pence using correct notation. Children at first level are not as confident using strategies to solve calculations mentally. Children who have achieved second level show fast mental maths skills. They confidently work with the equivalent forms of decimals, percentages and fractions to solve problems. Children are beginning to apply their skills in measurement to real life problems.

Shape, position and movement

- Children who have achieved early level name simple two-dimensional (2D) shapes in their familiar environment and discuss key properties. Children who have achieved first level find right angles in their environment. At second level, most children calculate accurately the perimeter of simple 2D shapes. Children who have achieved second level are developing their competence plotting locations on a grid.

Information handling

- Children who have achieved early level explore different ways to gather and display information using real-life situations. Children who have achieved first level add simple data to bar graphs and use the information to answer questions accurately. They interpret data from line graphs accurately. Children at all stages would benefit from developing their use of increasingly complex scales as they progress through the school, using technology where appropriate.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have developed effective systems to monitor children's attainment over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers capture a wider range of assessment information that shows a stronger picture of individuals' progress. Although this is at the early stages, senior leaders can now track and evidence the positive impact targeted support and interventions are having on almost all children who receive them.
- Senior leaders now use a wider range of data effectively to identify where teaching and learning needs to improve to raise attainment. For example, they correctly identified the need to strengthen children's mental agility and confidence with fractions. Their actions have had a very positive impact on older children's progress and is beginning to raise attainment in numeracy across the school.

- Attendance is currently 90.5% and has improved year on year since 2021. Senior leaders track attendance regularly and work proactively with families to help remove any barriers to school attendance. This approach has positively led to a reduction in the number of children who are persistently absent due to holidays and family circumstances. For example, senior leaders offer a flexible start time to help reduce anxiety for children and families. They should continue this valuable work to reduce further the number of children who are persistently absent.
- Senior leaders have developed targeted supports to help parents increase their children's time in school. However, a very small number of children are on part-time timetables. Senior leaders and staff should continue to work with parents and partners to increase the time these children are actively engaged in learning. Senior leaders should ensure that clear, regularly reviewed plans are in place to support each child's return to full-time education.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children celebrate their achievements widely across the school and online. This provides them with rich opportunities to share their successes. Children value the recognition of their peers, staff and families. Senior leaders track rigorously children's wider achievements and their participation in activities. They are beginning to track the specific skills that children develop as a result of their participation. Partners and staff deliver a range of clubs across the year to help children develop their skills and talents well. These clubs are free to attend and include sports, music, outdoor learning and board games. Children develop confidence, teamwork, creativity and perseverance through participating in these activities.
- Children participate in regular trips linked to their class work and take part in local sports festivals and tournaments. Almost all children lead a whole-school fundraising event and take part in cultural celebrations. These activities build leadership, organisation and communication skills that supports their learning across the curriculum.
- Children take on leadership roles effectively to support class organisation and learning. This helps children to demonstrate effectively a range of important skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and creativity. A minority of children contribute to planning and evaluating the impact of school improvement priorities.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff understand the socio-economic context of the community very well. They have established effective approaches to reduce the cost of the school day. For example, children experience free access to trips and excursions. Families also have weekly access to a community shop which is supported effectively by the school community. Parents are highly complimentary about the support provided to help their children engage positively with school.
- Senior leaders make effective use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional staffing to help improve children's readiness to learn, wellbeing, and attainment. For example, PEF is used well to support a nurture space. Staff respond promptly to signs of distress, preventing escalation and reducing barriers to participation. This targeted support is helping children return to class more settled and ready to learn.
- Most children requiring additional support are making expected progress toward their individual targets, with many steadily closing attainment gaps. A minority have made accelerated progress in targeted areas and are now on track to meet national expectations, due to well-planned targeted support and interventions. Almost all children receiving targeted support are progressing well in literacy and numeracy, including notable gains in their reading age.

- Senior leaders work effectively with a wide range of partners to plan and provide support for identified children and families. They plan together sensitively to mitigate against barriers to learning. This support for children and families is having a positive impact on children's outcomes. For example, senior leaders track and support children who are young carers. Most children who are young carers are making good progress and achieving nationally expected levels of attainment, as a result.

Other relevant evidence

- All children have access to two hours of high quality and progressive physical education (PE) each week. Children talk positively about their experiences in PE.
- Children take part in religious and moral education during class lessons and whole school assemblies, receiving their entitlement in line with national expectations. The local minister supports religious observance and a local charity motivates children to learn about the bible.
- Children regularly visit the inviting school library and use class libraries that are helpfully categorised into different genres. Children have taken responsibility for reorganising class libraries to make them more appealing. As a result, more children choose to read for pleasure.
- Children receive their entitlement to 1+2 languages. Children in P1 to P7 learn French in a progressive programme. Older children learn Spanish.
- The school has made consistent efforts to consult with parents on the use of PEF, including annual surveys and discussions with the parent council. Senior leaders should now involve parents more in conversations about the use of PEF.
- 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 education and Fife Council out of school club.

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.