

Summarised inspection findings

St Anthony's Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

24 June 2025

Key contextual information

St Anthony's primary school is a denominational school which serves the town of Saltcoats and its surrounding areas. The school roll is 245 children organised across ten classes. In September 2023, approximately one fifth of the children attending the school were registered for free school meals. Approximately one third of children attending the school reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones one and two. Just over one fifth of children require additional support with their learning.

The senior leadership team comprises a headteacher, appointed in January 2025, and an acting depute headteacher, appointed in March 2025. The principal teacher post is vacant.

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	

- Senior leaders and staff promote the Catholic faith very well and have developed a caring and nurturing ethos underpinned by the school values. Staff and children model the values and this impacts positively on the learning environments. Children's rights are respected, they are treated fairly and the positive relationships help them to succeed and achieve in their learning.
- Almost all children are motivated and engaged in their learning. Pupil voice features across the school and in a range of contexts. Children are encouraged to be agents of change in the school community and beyond. Children are proud of their school and value how their teachers engage and support them. They have high expectations of their own behaviour and the behaviour of other children across the wide range of learning environments. During learning, children display empathy, kindness and support each other very well. Staff have developed effective approaches and new spaces to support a few children who may become dysregulated.
- Teachers engage very well with professional learning to ensure consistency in their approaches to learning and teaching. This is most evident in the implementation of strategies to develop children's numeracy and mathematics and listening and talking skills. For example, teachers create engaging experiences that involve children actively applying their skills in relevant contexts. Across the school, children work together successfully and individually to complete tasks. In a few lessons, the purpose of the lesson is clear and children understand what they need to do to succeed. Moving forward there is a need to ensure that all children are clear about the purpose of the lesson and co-construct relevant steps for success.
- Teachers use questioning well to clarify instructions and check children's understanding during their learning. In literacy and numeracy, most teachers use questioning skilfully to differentiate tasks and activities and extend children's thinking. Strategies to develop children's higher order thinking skills through questioning or through differentiated approaches are not yet applied

consistently across the curriculum. Teachers need to challenge a few children more effectively in their learning across all areas of their learning.

- Children at P1 and P2 enjoy learning through play in the shared 'play zone' area. Most activities are planned well and provide opportunities for children to develop their creativity working individually or with their peers. Most activities include an appropriate balance of adult and child-led learning and adult and child-initiated learning. Most adult interactions are positive and there are a few examples where children's learning is extended very well. Staff are at the early stages of embedding learning through high-quality play experiences for children at P1 and P2. They need to continue to ensure that a range of assessment strategies are used to demonstrate children's progress more effectively.
- There are a few examples of teachers planning effectively for the use of digital technologies to support children's learning. This includes children using digital applications to reinforce learning and using their mathematical knowledge to program toys. Previously teachers used an online application to share children's learning with parents and to help children understand themselves as learners. There is a need for staff to create a manageable approach to capturing children's strengths and next steps in learning.
- Teachers monitor and check children's progress effectively in literacy and numeracy using a range of ongoing and periodic assessment. Their assessment approaches include standardised and ongoing assessments related to planned learning. Staff recently engaged in professional learning to improve further the quality of assessments. This professional learning has successfully improved the accuracy of teacher's professional judgments of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Teacher's range and type of assessment information also demonstrates very well the impact of focused interventions.
- Senior leaders monitor closely planning for children who require additional support with their learning. Together with staff, they have put in place well-considered strategies to support children. These strategies are making a positive difference to children with barriers to learning. Senior leaders need to continue to ensure that class teachers, at the early stages of the school, continue improve their approaches to differentiation. There is a need for teachers to observe learning and make adjustments to their teaching more effectively during the course of a lesson to meet children's learning needs.
- Staff engage in a wide range of moderation activities both in school and across the cluster. They focus on accuracy of CfE professional judgments based on high quality assessment information. As teacher's skills continue to be refined, improvements in the accuracy of judgments has impacted on reported attainment levels. Data for this session is broadly accurate and reflects well on the learning and teaching that children experience across the school.

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

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. In session 2023-24, data provided by the school shows that almost all children at P1, P4 and P7 achieved or exceeded nationally expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and English. In numeracy, data provided by the school shows that almost all children at P1 and P7 and most children in P4 achieved or exceed expected national levels.
- Children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress towards their individual targets in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy. Across the stages a few children would benefit from additional challenge to further support increased attainment. This includes developing children's skills in literacy across the curriculum.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are articulate when talking to adults and each other. They demonstrate good listening and talking skills in class and during social interactions. At early level, children are keen to share their ideas and opinions. They speak confidently when sharing their holiday recounts. Most children at first and second level would benefit from opportunities to further explore techniques used to engage and influence the listener. Increased opportunities to participate in persuasive activities, such as debates, could help to enhance children's presentation skills further.

Reading

- Across the school, children benefit from having access to a whole school library. The library offers wide range of reading materials for children to choose from. Staff should now ensure that all classes have regular access to this. This should support developing a positive reading culture including reading for enjoyment.
- At early level, most children use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read simple words. They are read aloud with fluency and expression. At first level, most children describe accurately the features of fiction books. At first and second level, children lack confidence when discussing the features of non-fiction books. At second level, children show understanding of different types of text and identify the purpose of these. Children should be supported to develop skills of inference and evaluation. This should include their ability to explore a range of questions to develop their understanding of a text.

Writing

- At early level, almost all children write simple words confidently and attempt to spell familiar words independently. At first level, most children use note taking well to support their writing. Teachers need to develop children's ability further to spell challenging words that do not follow regular spelling patterns. At second level, children have opportunities to create different styles of texts for a variety of purposes linked to real and meaningful contexts. Children's awareness of figurative language, such as metaphors and similes, should now be developed to further engage the reader.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, children make good progress in numeracy. As correctly identified by senior leaders, children should continue to develop their application of numeracy and mathematical skills in problem solving. This would provide more challenge in extending thinking skills and enable children to apply their learning using a range of different strategies including across the curriculum.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all children across the school are developing their knowledge of place value well, as appropriate to their age and stage. At early level, children add, subtract and order numbers to 20. They are confident in reading o'clock and half past times using an analogue clock. At first level, most children round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and calculate simple fractions of amounts. At second level most children make the link between fractions, decimals and percentages confidently.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children name and sort simple two-dimensional shapes. They are less confident in recognising simple three-dimensional objects. At first level, children are developing their knowledge of positional language through activities in the classroom using programmable toys. At second level, children are confident describing and drawing a range of angles.

Information handling

- Children at early level display information through active learning, using pictograms. At first level, most children are confident in using tally marks to collate data. At second level, most children demonstrate knowledge of a variety of ways to present data, for example line graphs, bar graphs and pie charts. Across the school, children would benefit from further opportunities to collect, display and interpret data for relevant real-life contexts and develop their information handling skills using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders follow local authority guidance on supporting and managing attendance. Attendance is in line with the national average and has been consistently in line over time. Senior leaders monitor attendance rigorously to identify and address patterns of concern. Staff plan well, including with multi-agency partners, to support children facing difficulties with attendance. A higher proportion of children living in SIMD one and two experience attendance below 90%. Senior leaders should continue to develop approaches to supporting these children and families to maximise access to learning.
- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics at key stages is improving over time. Staff's tracking evidence shows that attainment dips from P1 before increasing again at P4 to P7. As planned, staff should develop further their tracking systems to show individual children's progress across the CfE levels. This will support the identification and possible causes for any dips in progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their achievements and school. They celebrate achievements in several ways including at assemblies and end of year celebrations. Working together as a school community they have received recognition in national awards, such as their work on children's rights.
- All children are regularly involved in a wide range of pupil voice groups organised into different councils. These council groups focus on issues such as outdoor learning and intergenerational activities. Children develop skills of communication and collaboration well. Senior leaders should consider how membership of the different council groups is selected. There is a need, within the councils, for more pupil choice, increased leadership opportunities and how children's skills are developed progressively.
- Staff track children's participation and achievements such as certificates, school clubs, faith and leadership opportunities. This information is used to ensure children who are at risk of missing out are included.
- Senior pupils contribute positively to the life of the school and develop skills for learning, life and work in the application process for the role of buddy and librarian. Children consider their relevant experience and skills, when applying for these positions. Staff should extend this focus on skills development to support all children to understand how this could help them in the future.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff supported by partners, including the Parent Council, reduce the cost of school trips, events and social activities. This ensures all children experience a wide range of experiences and opportunities that enrich and engage them in their learning.
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is used to enhance staffing and resource targeted interventions for children who require additional support learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff use effective monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate the positive impact of these interventions. As a result, good progress is being made towards improving outcomes and accelerating progress in learning to close attainment gaps for identified children.
- The headteacher shares and seeks parental views on PEF proposals. She reports on the impact of PEF through the annual school improvement report. A higher proportion of children in SIMD one and two than those in SIMD nine and ten nationally are not on track to achieve minimum expected levels. Senior leaders should now develop their rationale for PEF based on robust analysis of a wide range of data to identify the school's attainment gap for specific groups of children.

Other relevant evidence

- Children received their entitlement to two hours of physical education per week.
- Children access fiction and non-fiction texts within the class libraries.
- Teacher's deliver modern foreign languages in line with the 1 + 2 programme.

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.