

Summarised inspection findings

Udston Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

4 March 2025

Key contextual information

Udston Primary School is a non-denominational school in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire. The school catchment includes part of the Hillhouse area of Hamilton as well as the Westcraigs area of Blantyre. The school roll is 314 children across 12 classes. The headteacher has been in post for 16 months. This session she is supported by one part-time deputy headteacher, one full-time principal teacher, who works two days as acting deputy headteacher, and one part-time acting principal teacher.

Last session, attendance was 93.5% which is above local and national averages. Just under half of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. Over a quarter of children are entitled to receive free school meals. Across the school, 40% of children have an identified support need. A few children across the school 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

- Staff are highly collaborative and work very effectively together to establish a welcoming and nurturing ethos for children. They understand very well the school community, are highly responsive to children's needs and provide quality care and support for children. Staff have a strong understanding of the importance of relationships on behaviour. Across the school most children are consistently respectful and caring towards their peers. Overall, children show a high level of respect towards adults. Children who require support to communicate and share their feelings are supported very well by staff. They use visual cues and prompts to communicate their feelings appropriately.
- Staff and children talk enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the school's vision and values. The values of 'trust, teamwork, respect, effort and kindness' underpin effectively the work of the school. Children share articulately the purpose and relevance of the values to their daily experiences. Teachers have developed consistent approaches to routines and learning environments, using visual timetables and prompts to help children experience smooth transitions. Senior leaders deploy highly skilled support staff to provide individualised support for children who require help with their learning. Senior leaders are highly visible across the school and provide support to individuals where appropriate. As a result, children learn in calm environments. Staff are positive role models for children. They work very effectively together to provide consistent and valuable support for children who require it. This supports a few identified children to engage positively in classroom experiences most of the time.
- Since the headteacher's arrival, there has been a clear focus on improving the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school. Together with staff, she has developed a learning, teaching and assessment policy which identifies the features of high-quality learning experiences. This is helping teachers to develop a shared understanding of what makes a

good lesson. Teachers collaborate very well at each stage. They now use curricular guidance from the local authority. This is developing further their understanding of appropriate pedagogies to develop well children's numerical knowledge and understanding.

- All teachers share the purpose of learning. In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions, supported well by discussion on how children will experience success. In a few highly effective examples, teachers involve children in developing a success checklist which encourages children to explain the skills they require to carry out tasks accurately. Teachers use questioning consistently well to check for understanding. A minority of teachers use open-ended questions very effectively which supports children in these lessons to explain their thinking and make connections across learning.
- Teachers consistently introduce new concepts through whole class introductions. They provide a few different questions to meet the range of learning needs within their classes. However, most teachers' use of whole class direct teaching results in extended introductions that do not meet the learning needs of a minority of children. This affects the pace of children's learning and, at times, their engagement in class discussion. Overall, children would benefit from brisker introductions. Teachers could then deliver differentiated teaching input to groups ensuring learning is consistently at the right level of difficulty.
- In all classes, teachers have established consistent routines to learning. They are well-organised and plan resources effectively to support children's learning. In most lessons, teachers plan well a range of opportunities for children to work independently and in groups. As a result, most children engage consistently well in their learning and communicate effectively with their peers. Most children take responsibility for their learning and access resources independently where required. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers are increasingly matching tasks and activities to children's abilities. A minority of teachers consistently plan tasks and activities that meet very well the range of learning needs in their class. As a result, children in these lessons are highly engaged and talk with increasing confidence about their learning. Senior leaders could support teachers to share this practice across the school. This should help all teachers plan consistently high-quality learning experiences that provide the right level of challenge and support for all children.
- Teachers at the early stages have developed a rationale for the use of play based on quality professional learning and national practice guidance. They have adapted the environment to provide opportunities for children to play daily. Teachers work closely with senior leaders to develop play experiences that meet the needs of each class. They plan opportunities for free play to help children practise important social and communication skills. As a result, most children negotiate and share resources independently. Older children use games regularly to practise new concepts in numeracy and literacy. This supports them to consolidate new concepts well. Teachers have developed a continuous play provision planner. A next step would be for teachers to review the resources and planning to ensure activities are sufficiently challenging to meet the intended learning. Teachers need to ensure they are planning across the curriculum to provide children with a broad range of experiences, knowledge and skills. Furthermore, teachers should continue to develop their interactions and questioning during play experiences to provide additional challenge and support for children who require it.
- Teachers plan well the use of digital technologies to support and extend learning. Children access devices, software, apps and games for learning across different curricular areas. They show a high level of confidence and independence when using digital technology to support their learning. For example, older children access online maps and use devices to research important historical landmarks. Younger children use programmable toys to demonstrate their understanding of position and movement.

- In most lessons, teachers use oral feedback positively to support children in their learning. In the majority of these lessons, teachers also use self- and peer-assessment and written feedback effectively to support children's next steps in learning. Senior leaders should now ensure that the quality and frequency of feedback children are given is consistent.
- Senior leaders have developed a supportive assessment calendar. They review and update the calendar regularly to help teachers with their evidence gathering. Together with teachers, senior leaders use assessment information well to develop an understanding of individual children's learning and progress. Teachers are strengthening approaches to using this evidence to directly inform teaching and learning. They use formative assessment strategies well in most lessons to support judgements about children's progress. Teachers should now support children to discuss their next steps in learning confidently.
- All teachers participate in moderation events which is helping to improve their professional judgements on children's attainment and progress. Teachers would benefit from identifying assessment tasks and expected outcomes when planning learning and teaching. This should help ensure that assessments link well to national standards. Senior leaders have plans to include high-quality assessments which allow children to apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts. This would also enrich the quality of assessment evidence. Staff rightly want to develop further their understanding of national standards through participation in moderation activities both within their school and with other schools. Senior leaders have plans to introduce standardised assessments to support professional judgements further.
- All teachers plan over different timescales using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. As a result, staff are able to plan appropriate support and interventions for individual children, including their involvement in small group activities to support their learning. This planning now needs to be consistent across the whole school to ensure continuity of learning across stages. Teachers should also take greater account of the different levels of support and challenge required to meet the needs of all children effectively.
- Staff use formative and summative assessment evidence to monitor and track learners' progress and achievement in literacy and numeracy. This provides senior leaders and teachers with valuable data to develop an overview of children's progress. Teachers and senior leaders meet each term to review the progress individual children are making. Teachers highlight children who are on track and not on track to attain expected levels. Importantly, they also discuss wellbeing concerns and the impact of economic disadvantage on children during these meetings. As senior leaders and teachers continue to refine and streamline planning documents, teachers need to capture more clearly the impact teaching and small group interventions are having on children's progress. Senior leaders should share their approach to capturing the impact of targeted support to ensure a consistent and coherent approach to planning and tracking across all stages.

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

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, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. At early and first levels, the majority of children are achieving expected CfE levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. By second level, most children achieve CfE levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. Staff plan appropriate interventions that help to accelerate children's progress as they move through the levels. Across the school, a few children are capable of achieving more in literacy and numeracy.
- Most children who require additional support with learning are making good progress towards their personal targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen well to adults and one another in a variety of contexts. At early level, the majority of children respond well to adults and peers during play and simple questioning. At first level, the majority of children listen to others' opinions and talk and listen well during discussions in pairs and groups. At early and first levels children need to continue to develop their listening skills to respond appropriately to the context. At second level, most children articulate and express their views confidently. They interact well with each other and build on ideas of their peers by clarifying points or adding additional information. They could extend discussions further by including more sophisticated vocabulary.

Reading

- Across the school, almost all children demonstrate enthusiasm and a keen interest in reading for enjoyment. Children at first and second levels benefit from the lunchtime reading club to enhance their reading for enjoyment.
- At early level, the majority of children recognise initial sounds and are blending single sounds. At first level, the majority of children read with increasing fluency and make good attempts to read unfamiliar words. The majority of children answer questions about texts confidently and demonstrate a sound understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Children should read aloud more often to develop their expression and tone. At second level, most children describe well how authors influence the reader. Almost all children identify the main ideas of a text with appropriate detail.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children form letters correctly and, with support, are beginning to use capital letters, full stops and finger spaces appropriately. They would benefit from further practice of writing independently, for example, through play experiences. The majority of children at first level write appropriately for a variety of purposes and are confident in writing persuasive texts. They select the right format and include relevant information when writing non-fiction texts. For example, they can write instructions for a specific purpose. Children at first level could develop their writing across the curriculum to include the features of different genres. Most children at second level are developing well their skills to write for a wider range of audiences and purposes and at extended lengths. Most children also effectively summarise texts and share their own viewpoint effectively. Children should now develop their use of imagery, to further engage the reader.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children identify and recognise numbers from 0 to 20. They use the language of before, after and in-between. The majority of children use appropriately the mathematical symbols + and = and use these well when adding within 10. They are not yet confident subtracting within 10. At first level, the majority of children use effectively a range of strategies to estimate an answer to a calculation or problem, for example, doubling and rounding. The majority of children use different coin and note combinations to pay for items and give change within £10 in real life contexts. They do not yet order common fractions to tenths. At second level, most children calculate simple percentages of a quantity and use this knowledge to solve problems in everyday contexts. They require more experience to find the perimeter and area of simple shapes.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children recognise, describe and sort common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects according to various criteria. They are not yet confident at creating a picture with a line of symmetry. At first level, the majority of children use appropriate mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects including side, face and edge. Children at first level need to develop their knowledge and understanding of right angles. Most children at second level effectively describe, plot and record the location of a point, using coordinate notation. They do not yet understand the terms acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe and classify a range of angles.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children confidently use their knowledge of colour, shape, size and other properties to match and sort items in a variety of different ways. At first level, the majority of children confidently collect information and sort it in a logical way. For example, children organise data gathered to find out the most popular novel by an author. At second level, the majority of children collect, organise and display a variety of data. For example, they create a line graph to show the busiest times for swimming at the local pool. Across first and second levels, children should apply these skills using a greater range of techniques, including the use of digital tools.

Attainment over time

- In session 2022/23, children's attendance was 91.2% which was in line with the national average. As a result of the headteacher's relentless focus on improving attendance, this improved to 93.5% in session 2023/24 which was above the national average. Senior leaders

have undertaken a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) with the West Partnership to develop strategies to improve attendance. Senior leaders effectively track and monitor whole school, stage and individual attendance and identify supports and interventions when attendance is below 90%. Senior leaders follow all local and national guidance for a few children whose attendance is extremely low. This is resulting in improved attendance for identified children.

- Senior leaders collate and analyse data effectively to monitor the progress over time of individuals, groups and cohorts of children in literacy and numeracy. They use this data very well to inform whole school improvement. For example, approaches to supporting children's readiness to learn and attainment in reading. All teachers have recently attended training in using the new local authority online tracker. This is improving teachers' skills in analysing their class data further to inform next steps in their practice. Senior leaders and teachers use data effectively to plan targeted interventions for individual children when they are not making expected progress. This is leading to accelerated progress in identified children's progress and attainment. As planned, senior leaders should continue to provide the high-level of support to all staff to analyse accurately the progress made as a result of interventions.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's successes and efforts are celebrated through newsletters, displays and assemblies. Most children feel encouraged to discuss their achievements both inside and outside of school. Senior leaders track children's achievements effectively and encourage parents to share their child's accomplishments. Parents are encouraged to attend assemblies and class showcase events to share in their child's successes.
- Senior leaders collaborate well with partners to collect and analyse feedback on attendance at after-school clubs and local events. They use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to create opportunities and ensure a wide variety of experiences are available for children to participate in for free outside of school. Attendance data highlights an increase in participation among identified children. Most children feel encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Children undertake a wide range of leadership roles within the school which supports them to develop skills for learning, life and work. These include opportunities such as house captains, junior librarians, peer mediators and sports captains. As a result, most children feel that their views are listened to and acted upon. As planned, staff should now support children to reflect on and talk about the skills they develop as a result of these roles.

Equity for all learners

- All staff understand the socio-economic background of children and families and the challenges it presents. Senior leaders allocate the school's PEF well to support children's health and wellbeing, and to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Identified interventions are accelerating children's progress and driving up attainment. Senior leaders consult with staff, children and parents to determine spend for the participatory PEF budget. As planned, senior leaders should continue to explore additional strategies to reduce further the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Senior leaders have developed a clear 'Cost of the School Day Policy' to address the financial burdens on families. Staff offer a free breakfast club each morning and provide materials for home learning at no cost. In partnership with the Parent Council, staff provide preloved uniforms, outdoor equipment and clothing and free access to events and trips. The school worked closely with the local authority to provide digital devices and Wi-Fi for families who require them. These efforts ensure that no child misses out due to socio-economic barriers.

Other relevant evidence

- All children follow a programme of religious and moral education at all stages of the school. Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and world religions, alongside their own beliefs and views.
- All children have access to at least two hours of high-quality physical education and sports across the school week.
- Children learn French across the school, building appropriately on prior learning to develop their listening, talking and writing skills as they progress through the school. Children across the school also learn British Sign Language.
- Staff used grant funding to create a well-established school library. They created an attractive space which is used by all children to select books for personal reading. Children across the school benefit from weekly library experiences where they can choose from a wide choice of fiction and non-fiction books. Children speak with enthusiasm about their school library. Most classes have class libraries that have a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts.
- Senior leaders, in consultation with children and families, have developed their approaches to supporting and enhancing children's experiences at break and lunch and during outdoor learning. They have developed an approach to outdoor play which is supporting almost all children to access the play environment in a creative and safe way. Previous school surveys demonstrated a link between behaviour in the playground and children not feeling respected. Almost all children now say that children respect one another. All staff have a shared vision, to ensure equitable outdoor play experiences for all learners during break times. Staff developed action plans with shared priorities for improvement and key actions that are carefully planned, implemented and reviewed.

Practice worth sharing more widely

In session 2022/23, children's attendance was 91.2% which was in line with the national average. As a result of the headteacher's relentless focus on improving attendance, this improved to 93.5% in session 2023/24 which was above the national average. Senior leaders have undertaken a Collaborative Action Research (CAR) with the West Partnership to develop strategies to improve attendance. Senior leaders effectively track and monitor whole school, stage and individual attendance and identify supports and interventions when attendance is below 90%. Senior leaders follow all local and national guidance for a few children whose attendance is extremely low. This is resulting in increasing attendance for identified children.

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.