

Summarised inspection findings

Leith Walk Primary School

The City of Edinburgh Council

29 April 2025

Key contextual information

Leith Walk Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the community of Leith in the City of Edinburgh. At the time of inspection 197 pupils were taught across 9 classes. The school follows an asymmetrical structure to the school day, with four longer school days Monday to Thursday, and an early finish at lunchtime on Friday. Approximately 10% of children live in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile 1. Approximately 44% of children have English as an additional language and 39% of children require additional support with their learning.

The school has experienced a number of changes in staffing in recent years, including within the senior leadership team. The headteacher was appointed in January 2023. The deputy headteacher returned from a period of secondment in August 2023 and the principal teacher was appointed in October 2024.

Leith Walk Primary School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are: - developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community - strategic planning for continuous improvement - implementing improvement and change	

- The headteacher encourages an inclusive atmosphere where staff have a strong understanding of the varying needs of children. Senior leaders, staff and children work well together to create a friendly, nurturing ethos underpinned by positive relationships.
- Shortly after her appointment, the headteacher led a review of the school’s vision, values and aims. Children, staff and parents contributed to this review which resulted in a refreshed aspirational school vision and affirmation of the well-established school values. Almost all children show a high level of understanding of the school values and model them well.
- Senior leaders consult with children and parents regularly in a variety of ways, including through surveys and focus groups. They use this information well to inform school improvement. For example, children contributed their views to the development of a learning and teaching framework. Staff are increasingly involved in the school’s self-evaluation activities. This has helped staff develop a stronger shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.
- The headteacher has led an ambitious and aspirational programme of school improvement in the past two sessions. This is based on an analysis of a wide range of information and data. The headteacher has used this information effectively to introduce a range of improvements to systems and processes. This has included new approaches to improve learning and teaching.

The progress in implementation of these improvements has been impacted in part by staff absences and changes in staffing over the past two years. While progress has been made, these approaches are not yet consistently embedded. Senior leaders and staff should now work together to continue to implement and evaluate the impact of these approaches on improving outcomes for children. Going forward, it will be important for senior leaders to continue to strategically manage the pace of change. Any new priorities should be linked to what will make the biggest difference to improving children's learning experiences and progress.

- Senior leaders ensure staff have protected time for professional learning and staff use this time effectively to develop their practice. For example, staff have engaged in valuable professional learning relating to the use of data and planning to meet children's needs. Senior leaders support teachers to engage meaningfully with annual professional reviews. A few teachers take a lead role in developing aspects of play pedagogy and outdoor learning. Staff work well together to share their skills and knowledge across stages to help build capacity within the team. Support staff would benefit from more opportunities for professional learning to enhance the valuable support they provide for children's wellbeing and learning needs.
- Senior leaders introduced this session a new system whereby staff take turns fortnightly to host meetings where they share learning and teaching strategies. This is providing an effective way for staff to share interests and expertise, such as in outdoor learning. In addition, teachers regularly reflect on their practice against the learning and teaching framework. Teachers conduct peer class visits and senior leaders conduct formal observations twice per year. Senior leaders should continue to use the information gathered from quality assurance activities, including monitoring of children's work, to provide staff with specific feedback on areas for improvement.
- From the beginning of this session, all children across the school are members of one of twelve child-led committees. Each committee meets once per month to focus on making plans and improvements in different areas, such as nurture, sports and play. Each committee is supported by a class teacher who helps children develop action plans for what they hope to achieve. This structure is helping children influence the life and the work of the school and develop leadership skills. Going forward, children should be supported to evaluate the impact of their work so that they can identify the influence their views are having.
- A range of partners make a positive impact on children's experiences and outcomes. For example, partnership arrangements are supporting children's wellbeing and learning. Staff work well with colleagues in the local learning community to enhance transitions and engage in moderation activities. This is helping to build capacity amongst the staff team and is strengthening teachers' understanding of national standards.
- Senior leaders' rationale for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is based on a strong understanding of the needs of children including those who face a range of barriers to their learning. This session PEF is focused on supporting identified children's wellbeing and attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders should further involve key stakeholders such as children and parents in the planning and evaluation of approaches.

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 work well together to create a calm, welcoming and nurturing learning environment. Staff are developing consistent expectations and routines, underpinned by the school values of kindness, respect and teamwork. Almost all children are well-mannered and interact positively with each other and the adults working with them.
- Staff use helpful strategies and approaches with children who require additional help to access learning. When support is required to help children engage with their learning or regulate their behaviour, staff manage this sensitively and calmly. Staff have worked together to develop a range of inclusive learning spaces, including quiet areas, a sensory room and a nurture base. Children have been involved in the design and organisation of classroom spaces.
- Across the school, teachers are developing more consistent approaches to teaching and learning using an agreed lesson structure and framework. This is helping children to be clearer about their learning focus and skills being developed in lessons. This structure is used most effectively in direct teaching and plenary sessions. Staff have identified the need to increase children's involvement in setting steps for success and shaping the next steps in lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, learning is well matched to children's needs and children engage well with learning. The level and quality of children's engagement is highest when both the direct teaching and independent or group tasks provide scaffolds and strategies to support and extend children's thinking. A few children require further challenge in their learning and a few children would benefit from more specific support to ensure they make better progress.
- Across the school, children are not yet using self- and peer-assessment effectively to support reflection on their own learning and that of others. This, along with other formative assessment strategies, should be a focus moving forward. Staff are well placed to develop approaches to providing feedback to children about their learning. Ensuring this is extended beyond literacy and numeracy will help children to have a clearer understanding of their progress, strengths and next steps across the curriculum.
- Teachers use digital technology appropriately to support and extend learning. Children at early level use a range of interactive smartboard applications and devices to take photographs of their work and activities. At first and second levels, digital applications are used for daily wellbeing 'check ins'.
- Staff have been working on approaches to implementing play throughout the school. Senior leaders created a play strategy and supporting framework which provides clear expectations

and suggested resources to support teachers' planning. Teachers have agreed to use project-based learning to develop play and experiential learning across the school. Having this shared focus is helping to develop staff knowledge and understanding of developmentally appropriate and motivating play. Teachers should continue to develop their understanding of how experiential learning activities can help develop and extend children's knowledge, skills and understanding.

- Children from P3 to P7 benefit from weekly high quality outdoor learning activities linked to project based learning, literacy and numeracy. These learning activities are very well planned, progressive and support children to develop a range of skills for learning, life and work. Children display a high level of engagement with and enjoyment of outdoor learning. This is an important strength in the school's work.
- The school's assessment and evidence framework provides a helpful structure for staff to gather a range of assessment information. Almost all teachers use a range of assessment strategies to encourage children to contribute to discussions, share what they have learned, and show their understanding. A few teachers adapt strategies and questions effectively to include all learning needs and monitor children's understanding. In a few classes, staff support children to use 'floor books' to think about and document their learning. This positive practice is a helpful step in taking forward plans to ensure children understand and articulate their individual learning journeys. Children across the school now need to be supported to periodically reflect and record their progress, strengths and next steps.
- Teachers use local authority progression planners for literacy and numeracy. These support staff to track learning and children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to further develop progression planners across other curricular areas. Staff should now review approaches to short- and medium-term planning, ensuring plans are consistent, flexible and responsive to children's needs. To help raise attainment, planned learning should be appropriately progressive for all children.
- Senior leaders meet with teachers regularly to discuss and review children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers supported by senior leaders have created a 'story of attainment' overview for each class. This is helping teachers to develop a stronger understanding and confidence in use of data. Teachers now need to use this information more effectively to identify and target gaps in children's learning to help children make the best possible progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use local authority progression pathways in numeracy and literacy. For other curricular areas, teachers plan project-based learning using bundles of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Going forward, senior leaders and teachers need to ensure children benefit from progressive learning in all curricular areas, such as health and wellbeing and technology.
- All children experience their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Teachers deliver progressive learning in French. As planned, staff should now re-introduce Spanish to ensure all children receive their entitlement to 1+2 languages. Children take part in religious and moral education during class lessons and whole school assemblies.
- All children from P3 to P7 experience high quality outdoor learning. Teachers use national guidance on outdoor learning and involve children in planning. Children's outdoor learning experiences are enhanced through effective use of an indoor/outdoor learning classroom. Teachers are developing a comprehensive outdoor learning progression pathway linked to global goals for sustainable development, children's rights and skills for learning life and work.
- Children across the school benefit from a well-resourced school library which has a range of appropriate and quality books, including texts in several different languages which reflects the diversity of the school community. Children have opportunities to take these books home or into their classroom. Senior leaders and staff should continue to work with parents and children to develop a culture of reading for pleasure.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders provide families with regular updates on the life of the school through regular newsletters and social media updates. Senior leaders have created a family engagement calendar which, for example, provides parents with opportunities to join their child's class for shared learning time. Staff lead family learning sessions which help parents to understand how they can support their children with phonics learning at home.
- Staff share information about what each class has been learning with parents through a weekly 'Friday Facts' newsletter. Staff meet with parents/carers twice per year to discuss children's progress. Teachers also give clear written communication on children's progress in an end of term report. A few parents would find it helpful to have more detailed information about their child's progress.
- Parents contribute to the life and the work of the school in a variety of ways, for example as parent helpers, leading after school clubs and as volunteers. Parents have led the creation of a neurodiversity family group which provides valuable opportunities for parents to talk, support each other and learn together.
- The Parent Council is supportive of the school and raises funds very effectively to support children's opportunities and experiences. For example, the Parent Council raised funds for children to have an inhouse pantomime experience and also purchased plants for the school garden. Most parents agree that they are informed about the work of the Parent Council.

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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The wellbeing of children is central to the work of the school. Children benefit from a nurturing and caring learning environment, where relationships between staff and children are positive and supportive. Senior leaders and staff know children and families well and have a clear focus on promoting inclusion.
- Children are supported well to understand and respect others. Almost all children behave well and display the school values of kindness, respect and teamwork. A few children at times demonstrate dysregulated behaviour. Staff support children well with agreed strategies and approaches. Children and staff recognise the positive impact these activities have in reducing incidents of dysregulated behaviour. There have been no exclusions this session.
- Staff are developing effective nurturing approaches across the school. Classrooms have specific areas where children access resources and spaces to enable them to relax. Children requiring help with their wellbeing benefit from access to a range of small group spaces, such as the Lighthouse Room for personalised support. These spaces help children develop communication skills and sensory development.
- Across the school, children benefit from daily 'check-ins' which help staff monitor children's sense of wellbeing and act on feedback. Children complete wellbeing surveys bi-annually. These provide senior leaders and teachers with useful information about children's wellbeing. Effective one-to-one interventions or follow up discussions take place where required. Senior leaders, support staff and teachers offer a range of targeted support for children who require additional support with their learning. As planned, staff should continue to evaluate the impact of these interventions more regularly to identify the difference being made for individual children.
- Senior leaders have created a class overview which details information about how children who require additional support learn best. This includes helpful information about strategies and approaches to best support individual children's learning and wellbeing. This is helping to provide an improved consistency of experience for children, particularly those who have more than one teacher throughout the week. Senior leaders now need to ensure support staff who work with individual children are made aware of this information as appropriate.
- Most children identify a trusted adult in school that they can speak to if they are worried or upset. A majority of children feel safe when they are at school, however a minority of children feel the school does not deal well with bullying. Senior leaders now need to work with children, staff and families to establish a clear, shared understanding of bullying and how concerns are addressed. They should combine this work with a review of anti-bullying policies and procedures to ensure children feel respected.

- Staff have an appropriate understanding of their responsibilities and statutory duties related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. A staged intervention approach is well established and supported by local authority procedures for children who require additional support with their learning. Appropriate targets are agreed with staff, children and parents at key times throughout the year. Senior leaders make effective use of partner agencies, seeking appropriate professional advice and guidance as required. As a result, partners such as active schools, educational psychology and the local authority inclusion team contribute well to positive outcomes for children.
- Children's wellbeing is well supported by high-quality outdoor learning within and outwith the school grounds. This helps children develop an understanding of their own community, experience nature and be more physically active. Children are well supported to participate in a range of clubs and activities which increase their sense of achievement. For example, children in P4 benefit from swimming lessons and children in P6 are learning cycling skills. Children are proud of their recent award for participation in sport. Older children confidently act as play leaders and buddies to support younger children with a variety of learning and achievement opportunities. This is supporting well a nurturing culture as well as allowing children to develop key skills in communication and resilience.
- Children have a good understanding of their rights. They are less confident discussing aspects of their wellbeing, such as how to stay safe online. Senior leaders should consider how the health and wellbeing curriculum can be developed further to better support improvements in children's understanding of their wellbeing.
- Children are developing their understanding of equality and diversity. They celebrate diversity through assemblies and class activities. Staff should continue to provide meaningful experiences for children to learn from and with each other, and to develop learning activities which promote diversity and challenge discrimination. As planned senior leaders should progress with plans to develop a robust induction programme of support for children who join the school, for whom English is their second language.
- Children who require additional support in their learning benefit from effective enhanced transition arrangements. Children at P7 develop a range of new skills during their residential trip. This is helping to build their confidence and resilience in new situations and at points of transition.

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The majority of children achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and numeracy. The majority of children are on track to achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy this session. A minority of children are capable of achieving more in their learning.
- The majority of children who require additional support with their learning are making satisfactory progress towards individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy from their prior levels of attainment. A minority of children could be making better progress in literacy.

Listening and talking

- At early level, the majority of children respond well to adults and peers during play and simple questioning. Children should continue to develop their skills in listening to others to respond appropriately. At first level, the majority of children listen to others' opinions and talk and listen well during class and group discussions. A few children would benefit from further practice at taking turns when talking, and developing active listening skills. At second level, the majority of children discuss topics in groups and share ideas and opinions. They are beginning to articulate and express their views more confidently. Going forward, staff should review approaches to teaching listening and talking skills across the school to help children build on prior learning.

Reading

- The majority of children at early level recognise initial sounds and are beginning to blend sounds. They would benefit from more opportunities to engage with non-fiction texts. At first level, most children are confident when discussing texts they have read. They are able to talk about favourite books and authors. At first and second levels, children would benefit from reading aloud more regularly to develop their fluency, expression and tone. Children at second level need to also further develop their understanding and use of literal, inferential and evaluative questions to explore texts.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children are beginning to form letters correctly and a few write words in simple sentences. Children should develop their confidence with more regular high quality, well planned writing opportunities. At first level, the majority of children spell familiar words correctly. They use their knowledge of grammar and connectives appropriately in their writing. At second level, the majority of children apply their knowledge of spelling patterns,

rules and strategies to spell most words correctly. Staff should ensure children at first and second levels write more frequently and for a range of different purposes.

- Overall, children's skills in presentation and handwriting need to improve across all levels. Staff should agree a consistent approach to jotter presentation across the school with clear expectations, to encourage children to take pride in the written work they produce.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few are making good progress, and a minority could make better progress.

Number, money and measure

- The majority of children working at early level, confidently recall number sequences within the range 0-20. They use a variety of methods to count on in ones beyond 20. They are not yet confident at sharing out in smaller groups. At first level, the majority of children understand place value of hundreds, tens and units, and record numbers accurately. Children are not confident in times tables and would welcome daily practice. At second level, the majority of children read, write and order whole numbers to 1,000,000. They are less confident in applying their knowledge of number facts to solve equations.
- Across all levels, staff should now support children to present their notations and calculations to a higher standard. Children at first and second levels would benefit from more regular practice of key numeracy concepts.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children accurately use the language of position and direction to follow instructions in movement games. At first level, the majority of children understand lines of symmetry and identify these on a range of two-dimensional shapes. At second level, most children use regular shapes to continue sequences and patterns and create tiling patterns using regular shapes.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children organise pictorial information and objects into sets and categories. At first level, most children gather and represent information in simple graphs and tables. At second level, most children gather, display and organise information using charts, graphs and spreadsheets.

Attainment over time

- Staff have correctly identified the need to continue to raise attainment in both literacy and numeracy. As planned, senior leaders should continue to use the recently established systems to monitor more closely the progress of individual children, specific groups and cohorts. This will help identify gaps in learning, patterns and trends.
- The headteacher effectively tracks and monitors children whose attendance is at risk of falling below 85%. At the time of inspection, a few children's attendance is below 90% however overall attendance levels have improved from previous years. Approaches to improve attendance include targeted support for children through, building strong home-school partnerships, arranging informal meetings with families, and making links with the local health visitor. There are no children on part-time timetables.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff regularly celebrate children's achievements in school and outwith, through 'newsletters, at assemblies and on digital platforms. Staff, parents and partners support a variety of clubs

including sporting, digital, and creative clubs. As a result of a strong focus on sports and physical education, the school recently achieved the highest level of participation in a national award.

- Senior leaders are at the early stages of tracking wider achievement experiences and the participation of children in these. Senior leaders should continue with plans to analyse this information to address any gaps in opportunities and reduce potential barriers to participation. Senior leaders should now also support children to understand better the skills they are developing through their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a good awareness of the socio-economic background of children and their families. Almost all staff have been trained in the local authority 'Leadership for Equity' course. As a result, staff are now more confident in identifying barriers to participation and learning. Staff ensure that all after-school clubs and almost all school trips are free of charge. Additionally, staff provide access to pre-loved uniforms and a foodbank for families.
- The Parent Council supports the life and work of the school very well. They contribute funds to the school to enhance children's experiences. They provide financial support to ensure all children experience 'The Leith Walk 50', which is 50 experiences that all children will participate in during their time at Leith Walk Primary School. They also fund the Christmas Panto, P7 hoodies, subsidise residential experiences and buy additional resources for the school. This ensures that no child misses out on experiences due to socio-economic barriers.
- Senior leaders allocate PEF to additional staffing and resources to improve attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff should now work together to monitor the effectiveness of planned interventions and approaches on improving outcomes for children. This will help ensure that planned interventions and strategies are impacting positively on children's progress and attainment.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Leith Walk Primary School is situated in the middle of the city of Edinburgh. There are no green spaces within the school grounds. Despite this, children in P3 to P7 benefit from weekly high-quality outdoor learning. This is taught through a well planned, progressive programme which takes good account of national guidance. Outdoor learning is helping children to develop important skills for learning, life and work and enjoy learning in a motivating context.

Children's outdoor learning experiences are enhanced through effective use of an indoor/outdoor learning classroom. Digital technologies are used effectively in the outdoor learning programme, helping children to use their knowledge and skills through project-based contexts. Teachers involve children in planning and skilfully provide focused teaching input in class before children practise skills outside, such as the use of scale in maps. This approach is helping to support children's core literacy and numeracy skills.

Children demonstrate high levels of enthusiasm for and engagement in outdoor learning. They recognise the wellbeing benefits of being outdoors and enjoy learning about nature and the climate. Teachers are developing bespoke progression pathways making links with children's rights and skills for learning life and work.

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.