

Summarised inspection findings

Lochgelly South Primary School

Fife Council

20 January 2026

Key contextual information

Lochgelly South Primary School is a non-denominational school located in Lochgelly, Fife. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 169 children taught across seven classes. The headteacher has been in post since 2021 and is supported by a deputy headteacher. There are approximately 51% of children living within Scottish Index Multiple Deprivation zones 1-3. The headteacher reports approximately 33% of children require additional support with their learning. Across P6 and P7, 29% of children are registered for free school meals.

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 and all staff encourage a warm, nurturing and inclusive ethos. They have a strong understanding of the needs of most children and develop positive and caring relationships with them. Children and staff are proud of their school and almost all children enjoy learning. Senior leaders and staff reviewed recently the school values of respect, responsibility and relationships, in consultation with children and parents. The headteacher awards certificates at assembly to children who display these school values through their behaviours and actions. These values are embedded fully within the school and its wider community. Children understand well what the values mean in practice.
- Almost all parents hold positive views of the school. Parents value the work of the school and the support provided by senior leaders and staff. Senior leaders respond to parents' views well to inform improvement and change. For example, parents' views helped to shape the school's anti-bullying policy. Senior leaders have sought parents' views regularly around parent evenings, transitions and the format of school reports. Most parents agree that the school takes their views into account when making changes. These effective approaches to working with parents help to support further a positive and caring ethos.
- The headteacher and staff agree together the school improvement plan (SIP) priorities. The current SIP includes a whole school focus on contexts for learning, including outdoor learning and the use of loose parts play. However, these priorities are not informed by robust self-evaluation. The headteacher now needs to take a more strategic approach to school improvement to ensure priorities are evidence based and linked to raising attainment. Senior leaders and staff should use more robust approaches to self-evaluating the work of the school. This will help to ensure that all staff are involved in driving forward evidence-based improvement. Senior leaders now need to explore ways to involve meaningfully children and parents in school improvement activities.
- Senior leaders and staff use a detailed quality assurance calendar which maps out the activities staff will undertake to evaluate the quality of work in school. These evaluation activities include learning conversations with children, children's progress meetings, observations of learning and sampling children's work. Senior leaders now need to ensure

quality assurance activities are more robust and improve outcomes for children. They need to take a more rigorous approach to ensure areas of improvement are identified quickly and appropriate supports are implemented at pace.

- Teachers across the school are committed to continuous professional learning to improve outcomes for children. They lead practitioner enquiries within their classrooms, focusing on a range of identified areas which include writing and wellbeing. As a result of this, most teachers feel empowered to initiate change that is improving outcomes for learners. All staff took part in professional learning which focused on de-escalation techniques and nurturing approaches. This supports staff to manage skilfully children's emotional and social needs, reducing any disruption to learning. Children learn in very calm, positive and purposeful learning environments across the school. Almost all children engage well with learning in the classroom most of the time.
- Support staff and janitorial staff take on effective leadership roles across the school community, such as supporting the junior leaders programme and running after school clubs. They also participate in professional learning. They use the skills and knowledge gained very well to support children to access their learning and enhance learning experiences. All support staff ensure that the playground is a safe and happy environment for children to play together. This positive culture of leadership at all levels supports staff to understand their individual and collective impact on improving outcomes for children.
- Children lead and participate in a range of pupil leadership groups and committees regularly. Almost all teaching staff support pupil leadership groups well. Children value the worthwhile opportunities they have to contribute to the life and work of the school. An example of this is the work of the read leads. Children work together to support a positive culture of reading across the school. They also manage the organisation of Book Week, celebrating World Book Day and arranging visits to the local library. Children updated their school library by choosing a more diverse range of books. Children have received accreditation for their work in promoting reading to others. The Sports Committee organise and support lunchtime clubs and a whole school games event. Children see the positive difference they are making to their school community and develop their leadership skills effectively.
- Staff have a strong understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school community. Staff use this information well to ensure they understand the challenges that may impact on individual children's learning or wellbeing. Senior leaders should now review plans to ensure that Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is having maximum impact on raising attainment. They should ensure that identified interventions improve outcomes for children. This includes accelerating the progress of those children impacted by their socio-economic circumstances.

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

- Across the school, staff support children effectively through positive and nurturing relationships. Almost all children are kind to each other and are motivated to learn. Children use a range of appropriate strategies and resources confidently to support them in their learning. Almost all classrooms provide children with a calm, quiet space, creating a respectful and purposeful learning environment.
- Staff know children, and their needs, very well. In almost all classes, staff have high expectations of behaviour based on class charters, which are underpinned by children's rights. Staff deal sensitively and skilfully with any instances of dysregulated behaviour enabling children to re-engage with their learning quickly. Overall, most children across the school behave well.
- Teachers are taking positive steps to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Together, they have developed and begun to implement, agreed features of a good lesson. In most lessons, teachers now share the purpose of learning and how children can be successful in their learning. Children are developing a better understanding of what they need to do to succeed as a result.
- In most lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. However, a few lessons are overly teacher led, with too much time given to teacher explanations. As a result, the pace of children's learning is too slow. In a majority of lessons, there is an over reliance on textbook-driven approaches leading to children becoming passive in their learning. As planned, teachers should continue to develop approaches to enable children to be more active participants in their learning.
- Staff provide children with regular and helpful written and oral feedback. In addition, children have regular opportunities to self- and peer-assess, particularly in writing. These approaches support children well to understand what they are doing and how they can improve. In most classes, children set targets to improve their learning. They record termly targets in their learning logs and share these with their parents. Teachers should now encourage children to review their progress in learning more frequently.
- Staff have made a positive start to implementing play pedagogy in P1 and P2. In line with the school improvement plan, staff are at the early stages of developing loose parts play across all stages. Children are beginning to use a wide range of new equipment to be more creative and apply their learning in different ways. Building on this positive start, staff should continue to engage with national guidance, ensuring a better balance between adult-led and child-led learning.

- Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support teaching across the school. Children use digital technology effectively to support their learning. They use tablets and laptops for research, recording their learning, creating presentations and to independently access online resources. As planned, teachers should now ensure that children develop digital skills progressively across the school.
- A whole school assessment calendar is in place to inform the range and timing of assessment approaches used across the school. These assessments include formative and standardised assessments. Teachers now need to ensure that they use assessment information more consistently across the year to support learning and teaching. They need to develop further their confidence in using a range of assessment evidence to better inform their professional judgements. Although teachers engage in moderation activities within the school, particularly in relation to writing, they now need to be more outward looking. This will support them to develop further their understanding of national standards. Senior leaders now need to ensure a more structured approach to moderation and include activities with other schools.
- Almost all teachers plan well for children's learning across a range of timescales. They use effectively progression frameworks linked to Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. Most teachers involve children in planning and reviewing their learning by asking about what they already know, what they would like to know and what they have learned about a topic. Moving forward, teachers should ensure a stronger focus on children leading and planning their learning.
- Teachers use the school and local authority tracking tools to track the progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The headteacher meets with teachers four times across the year to discuss the progress of individual children. These meetings need to be more rigorous and robust to ensure a positive impact on raising attainment across the school. Teachers should continue to track children's attainment across all curricular areas to provide a more holistic view of children's progress.
- Teachers plan a range of interventions for children who require additional support in their learning. These interventions are appropriate with some supported well through partnership working. Teachers now need to plan for those children who require more challenge in their learning. All staff should now ensure they have higher expectations of what children can achieve.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Almost all teachers use local authority progression pathways to inform their planning. These pathways take account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. Teachers deliver most curricular areas outwith literacy and numeracy through cross curricular topics. Senior leaders should now work with teachers to ensure an appropriate balance between curricular areas taught discretely and those that link together with topics. This should help ensure that children experience an appropriate breadth and balance of learning across the curriculum.
- Teachers are at the early stages of developing children's skills across their learning. Senior leaders and teachers should now work together to embed their progressive skills framework. This will support children to make connections between what they are learning and the skills they are developing through the curriculum.
- The headteacher and staff work together to ensure children have smooth transitions across the school. Teachers share relevant information and evidence about children's progress, wellbeing and individual needs as they move from one stage to the next. Children are supported well when moving from early years to P1 and from P7 into secondary school. This supports children to settle quickly and have continuity in their learning. Staff adapt the curriculum well for those children who require additional support in their learning to help them make good progress in learning.
- At all stages, children receive two hours of high-quality physical education each week, using indoor and outdoor spaces well. All children learn Spanish from P1 to P7, with French introduced at P5. Teachers support children well to build on their language skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for religious observance in line with national guidance. Children learn about world religions. They celebrate key events as part of the school diversity calendar, including Diwali. Staff provide regular opportunities throughout the year for religious observance. This is helping children improve their knowledge of the world, their own values and the values of others.
- Across the school children enjoy selecting books to read from their class libraries. Children speak positively about selecting books from the newly refurbished school library. They are proud of their school library and enjoy spending time there. This is helping to foster children's love of reading and develop further children's reading skills.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The headteacher and teachers inform parents effectively of their child's progress. This happens in a number of ways, including parents' evenings, learning logs and end of session reports. Parents share in their child's learning regularly through school assemblies and family time sessions. As a result, almost all parents agree that they receive helpful, regular feedback about how their child is learning and developing.
- The proactive Parent Council are very supportive of the school. They work closely in partnership with the headteacher and staff team. This includes fundraising for resources and supporting events which enhance and improve the experiences of children, such as the Christmas Coffee Morning and Summer Fayre. These events are well attended by the school community and support further the sense of community across the school. Children's involvement in these events develops further their communication and leadership skills.

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

- Almost all children and staff feel valued and respected and demonstrate consistently the school values of respect, responsibility and relationships in all interactions. All staff support sensitively children who may find managing their emotions challenging and treat all children with dignity and respect. This ensures a calm and inclusive environment where most children behave well. All children identify a trusted adult with whom they can share any worries or concerns. This supports almost all children to agree that they feel safe in school.
- Children have received accreditation for their work on children's rights. They worked well with staff to develop class charters linked to children's rights. Older children worked well with staff to develop a senior charter. This is displayed across the school and children refer to this regularly. A few children can discuss some rights and what they mean to them. Staff should now make more explicit links to children's rights through learning. This should support children to understand how their rights are enacted in their daily lives.
- Children are at the early stages of understanding the language of wellbeing. Almost all children talk about being safe and healthy. Staff now need to help children learn further the language of wellbeing and how this links with their lives at school and at home. This should help children to use a shared vocabulary to discuss and reflect meaningfully upon their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Staff should continue to support children to set and review personal targets to improve their wellbeing. This should help children to develop a better understanding of their own wellbeing over time.
- Staff have a strong understanding of the importance of wellbeing to a child's attainment, achievement and development. Staff work collaboratively to meet the needs of children who require help with dysregulation very well. They share effective practice, strategies and resources and have developed a useful toolkit to support each other. Teachers review the physical and social environment regularly, using a self-evaluation framework. This ensures classrooms are inclusive. Children have easy access to resources, including the use of digital technologies to support learning. Staff use visual symbols very well to support discussions with children. This is helping to reduce barriers to learning and improve children's readiness to learn.
- Teachers ensure that the health and wellbeing curriculum is relevant and planned in a cohesive and progressive manner. This includes helping children to learn how to be safe online and about substance misuse. Children benefit from two hours of physical education each week, which helps them to understand the importance of being healthy and active. School staff and the Active Schools Coordinator ensure children benefit from being active through a wide range of additional physical activities. These include table tennis, netball and boccia which supports the development of skills in these sports very well. The school has received national

accreditation for the work they have undertaken in involving children from across the school in a wide variety of sports.

- Staff work successfully with a wide range of partners to support and promote wellbeing for whole classes, small groups, individual children and families. As a result, a few children are benefiting from targeted support to re-engage in learning within the classroom environment. Support for learning teachers and support staff deliver appropriate targeted interventions to meet the individual needs of a few children. Teachers use digital technology effectively to support children's writing. Bracken, the Thera pet dog helps to support children to read more confidently. Children and staff speak positively about Bracken being in school. These interventions are helping to improve children's confidence in reading and writing.
- All staff undertake appropriate professional learning to support better those children who require additional help with their learning or wellbeing. This includes learning around the nurture principles, de-escalating heightened behaviours, the impact of trauma and creating inclusive classrooms. As a result, all staff are developing skills and confidence in identifying and addressing children's needs. This is enabling them to reduce potential barriers to participation for children more effectively. Consequently, most children are engaged and motivated in their learning.
- All staff understand and fulfil their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding, wellbeing, equality and inclusion. They know how to protect children and meet children's needs. Senior leaders are in the early stages of using an online wellbeing planning profile. Senior leaders should work with staff to consider how this information can help them understand better how children's wellbeing changes over time.
- 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 the school and the school meals provider.
- The leadership team have established a staged intervention approach to identifying children's needs. Senior leaders and staff meet regularly with parents and partners to create plans for children who require additional support. This ensures a partnership approach and allows staff to share strategies between home and school. Senior leaders involve partners and parents in reviewing children's progress and identifying next steps. Staff now need to develop individual plans with specific, measurable targets to help children who require additional support. It is important for children to be part of this process. This should ensure that children are more involved in improving their learning.
- Children, staff and parents have created an anti-bullying policy in line with national guidance. This is shared widely across the school community. Senior leaders monitor all incidents and allegations of bullying and take appropriate steps to mitigate these. Almost all children feel that bullying is dealt with effectively. Most children demonstrate respect, consideration and empathy in their interactions with each other. The pupil council recently introduced 'positive postcards' to celebrate positive behaviour. Children receive these awards during weekly assemblies and respond well to this encouragement.

- Children from P5 to P7 took part in national learning about equality and how to challenge discrimination. They used this learning to raise awareness of equality and how to challenge discrimination among their own families. Staff should continue to develop children's understanding and knowledge of diversity as part of the health and wellbeing curriculum. This should help children promote further, diversity and inclusion across the school.

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 English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children across the school achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Across the school, a few children are capable of achieving more and would benefit from further challenge in their learning.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress against their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- At early level, most children make satisfactory progress in writing. At first and second levels, most children make good progress in writing. At all levels, children make good progress in reading, listening and talking.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen well and follow simple instructions. At first level, most children take turns and contribute well to class discussions. They should develop further their confidence when sharing their views. At second level, most children express their views clearly and work well in pairs and in groups. They listen well and respond to the views of others. Most children across the school require support to be more confident in talking to groups or larger audiences.

Reading

- At early level, most children recognise successfully initial sounds and known common words. They answer questions well about a story they know and make predictions about what might happen next. At early level, most children need to develop an understanding of phonics at a faster pace. At first level, most children read a familiar text with confidence. They decode unknown words well using letters and blends. They describe confidently the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. At second level, most children apply a range of strategies appropriately to read and understand texts. They answer inferential questions confidently and identify use of language and the effect on the reader. Across all stages children read regularly for enjoyment. They have opportunities to choose from a wide range of books from both their class and school library.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children write a simple sentence with increasing confidence, using a capital letter and a full stop. They retell a familiar story successfully through drawings. At early level, children should have further opportunities to practise their early writing skills. At first level, most children use their knowledge of phonics and spelling strategies successfully to spell familiar and unfamiliar words. They link sentences accurately using common conjunctions. At

second level, most children create a range of texts and talk about the features of different genres. All children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count forwards and backwards to 10 and beyond. They complete addition and subtraction calculations within 10 accurately. Most children link daily routines and events to what is happening in their own life. A few children are less confident using and recognising money and naming coins. At first level, most children round numbers effectively to the nearest 10 and 100 and order numbers to 1000. They use both analogue and digital clocks well to tell the time and work out simple duration. They are not yet confident in applying their addition and subtraction strategies to problems involving money. At second level, most children are confident in using multiplication. Children are less confident at converting simple fractions to decimals. Children across first and second level would benefit from developing effective strategies to support mental calculations.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Most children understand and correctly use the language of positional direction including in front, behind, above and below. At first level, almost all children recognise common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They confidently use compass points such as North, South, East, and West. They would benefit from developing their knowledge and understanding of the appropriate vocabulary to describe the key features of three-dimensional objects. At second level, almost all children use mathematical language well to name and describe different angles such as acute and obtuse. They are less confident in calculating the area of shapes.

Information handling

- At early level, most children interpret simple graphs and charts well. At first level, most children explain confidently how to gather and record information using tally charts and extract information from a bar graph. At second level, a few children describe a range of ways to display data. Children at first and second level now need to build their skills in analysing and interpreting a wider range of graphs.

Attainment over time

- Over the last few years children's attendance has been consistently above the local authority and national average. Attendance currently sits at 94%. Senior leaders carry out robust monitoring of attendance and weekly attendance data for all children is tracked and monitored. They initiate sensitively support and intervention if attendance drops below 90%. Senior leaders can demonstrate where this has impacted positively on a few families. Children's positive attendance is supported effectively by staff's caring and nurturing approaches.
- Overall, most children make good progress as they move through the school. The headteacher uses a range of data to analyse the progress and attainment for cohorts of children. Moving forward, teachers need to use this data more robustly to support their judgements about children's progress. This will support them better to identify attainment gaps across different cohorts of children and appropriate, targeted interventions. This should accelerate progress and raise attainment for particular groups of children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Senior leaders track children's achievements in and out of school across the year. Senior leaders, staff and partners use this information successfully to identify any gaps in children's experiences. Staff plan opportunities to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out. Almost all children leave school being able to swim and ride a bike. This ensures children have these skills for life. Children enjoy the experiences offered to them and children's participation in these activities is well attended. Staff should continue to develop children's understanding of the skills they are developing through their participation in wider achievements.
- Children's achievements are celebrated during weekly assemblies, certificates and awards. These include reading, lunchtime and 'value inspired pupil' awards and school displays. Children feel valued and have a sense of pride in their achievements. They look forward to sharing them with the school community.
- Children across P1-P7 develop well as confident and successful individuals through their participation in a wide variety of pupil leadership roles. For example, through their participation in the Eco Committee, the Rights Respecting Schools group and in the pupil council. Older children develop leadership skills through their role as house captains, vice captains and being a Junior Sports Leader. These opportunities develop children's confidence and team working skills as children contribute positively to the life of the school.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural and economic context of the school community. Staff understand the challenges faced by families and have prioritised reducing the cost of the school day. Senior leaders have developed an equity calendar which recognises any potential barriers to learning across the school year, caused by economic disadvantage. They consider carefully any unavoidable costs. Families benefit from a range of partnerships including, well established relationships with the 'Big Hoose' project and 'Fairshare'. As a result of these initiatives, children are supported to participate fully in the school day.
- Senior leaders track the progress of all children, including those who have barriers to learning or experience disadvantage. Senior leaders plan targeted interventions for children supported by Pupil Equity Funding. They now need to ensure they evaluate rigorously, the impact of all targeted interventions to ensure they are raising attainment.

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.