

Summarised inspection findings

Kingsbarns Primary School

Fife Council

25 August 2026

Key contextual information

Kingsbarns Primary School is a small, rural non-denominational school in the village of Kingsbarns near St Andrews in Fife. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 37 children organised across two multi-stage classes. The headteacher has been in post for over nine years. She has a shared headship of another school in St. Andrews. The headteacher is supported by an acting depute headteacher who has leadership responsibilities across Kingsbarns and the other school. The majority of children who attend the school reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 7. The headteacher reports that 35% of children require additional support with their learning.

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 have developed a nurturing and welcoming ethos across the school. The school vision of 'where learning is an adventure' underpins their work. All staff praise children regularly for their efforts and positive attitudes to learning. Almost all children demonstrate very well the school values and demonstrate these well in class. Older children are positive role models for younger children and pair up with younger children for a range of learning activities. Staff and children are very proud of their school.
- Staff work well together to establish inclusive and supportive learning environments. Children use quiet spaces and visual prompts to help them, when required, to manage their feelings and engage in learning. Children create helpful class charters which reflect their rights. These help them to understand positive relationships and behaviours. Across the school, children behave very well and engage positively in their learning experiences.
- Senior leaders have agreed with teachers a helpful learning and teaching strategy to ensure children experience a consistency of approach. All teachers follow the 'six for success' effectively to ensure lessons include key features of high-quality learning and teaching. This includes helpful strategies that children are encouraged to follow in order to become successful learners. For example, children understand that feedback helps them to 'grow' their learning. Teachers give clear instructions during lessons. They share the purpose of lessons effectively which supports children to understand how they can be successful. Teachers should continue to involve children in identifying how they will be successful in their learning and the skills they are developing when learning.
- Teachers plan a range of activities which are well-matched to children's needs. They make links regularly to prior learning which supports children well to develop their understanding and build on learning from previous lessons. Children demonstrate high levels of engagement in

their learning and cooperate very well in pairs and groups. In most lessons, teachers manage the pace of learning effectively to sustain children's engagement. In all lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding and to recall key information. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning skilfully to support and extend children's thinking, creativity and curiosity. Teachers should build on this practice to support further children's higher-order thinking skills.

- Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies well and provide children with helpful verbal feedback. This is supporting children to better understand their own progress in learning. Teachers' written feedback in writing is specific and supports children to make progress and improve. Almost all children know their literacy targets and describe confidently what they need to do to achieve them. Teachers should now provide high-quality written feedback beyond literacy to support children to understand better their progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- Staff make regular, effective and creative use of a wide range of contexts through which children learn, including the playground, village green, beach and woodland. For example, older children created model circuits with natural materials from the woodland to demonstrate their knowledge of circuit symbols. As a result, all children are motivated and engaged in their learning outdoors and apply important life skills well in a range of different contexts. As a next step, staff should track the skills for learning, life and work which children are developing through participating in these experiences.
- Teachers access training and use digital technology effectively to enhance and extend children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. They use digital tablets well to capture images to exemplify pieces of successful learning to support children's understanding of progress. All children use digital technology regularly to enhance, consolidate and personalise how they present and record their learning. Digital leaders support older children to create animations with added sound and text on digital tablets. A few children who require additional support make effective use of assistive technology to improve their confidence to produce extended pieces of writing.
- Children benefit from a range of resources and activities that support learning through play. They make purposeful choices and consolidate class learning as they apply their skills through play contexts. As planned, staff should continue to engage with national guidance and work with colleagues from other schools to continue to develop learning through play experiences.
- Senior leaders have developed an effective whole school assessment calendar. Teachers use a wide range of standardised and diagnostic assessments, including national standardised assessments, throughout the year. This supports them very well to gather reliable and robust evidence of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use this information and data effectively to help them identify any gaps in children's learning and plan appropriate support and interventions. Staff should continue to develop further their use of high-quality assessments where children apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Teachers moderate planned learning regularly through informal discussions, collaborative planning and sharing of practice. They have engaged effectively with colleagues from cluster schools in moderation activities in writing, listening and talking and most recently art and design. As a result, teachers have a shared understanding of national standards and their confidence has improved when making professional judgements on children's progress. Senior

leaders should continue to support teachers to develop further a shared understanding of national standards across the curriculum.

- Teachers plan well for children who require additional support with their learning. They provide effective interventions and work with support staff to review the impact of interventions and ensure children make appropriate progress in their learning. Teachers value and consider children's views when planning learning across a variety of contexts. For example, children share what they already know and what they would like to find out about when planning class topics. Teachers consider carefully the school context and local area well when planning learning to provide children with a broad range of motivating and relevant experiences.
- Teachers use local authority tracking tools well to monitor the progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders meet with teachers termly to discuss the attainment and progress of learning of individual children. Together, they identify children who require additional support with their learning. Staff have started to track children's progress across all curricular areas. Staff should continue to develop further the approaches to tracking children's progress across all curricular areas to provide a more holistic view of children's progress and attainment.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised 37 children with small numbers at each stage. To avoid identifying individuals, attainment and progress is expressed in general statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The overall quality of attainment is very good. Almost all children achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy at all stages. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are on track to achieve expected levels of attainment in numeracy, with a majority of children on track in literacy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are articulate and speak clearly and confidently. Younger children listen well to stories and retell these with confidence, providing relevant detail. They enjoy listening to others and engage well as they play and learn in pairs and small groups. Older children engage well in discussions, interacting effectively with each other and build on the ideas of others. Older children understand and respond well to more complex instructions. Across the school, all children enjoy regular experiences to present and perform to a larger audience at assemblies and whole school events such as Scottish celebrations and pantomimes.

Reading

- Across the school, children show enthusiasm for reading for pleasure and access books from the school library and mobile library. Younger children use their knowledge of letters and sounds confidently to read familiar words. They use picture cues well and their knowledge of sounds to read unfamiliar words. Older children share their favourite authors and can explain their reasons why. They identify successfully the key features of non-fiction texts. Older children answer a range of literal and inferential questions about texts well.

Writing

- Younger children form letters and words correctly and write simple sentences using capital letters, spaces and full stops independently. Younger children are developing their use of vocabulary and sequencing writing to improve the quality of their writing. For example, younger children identify and use persuasive language to encourage the audience to save the

rainforest. Older children write for a range of purposes linked to topic learning including, recounts, newspaper reports, imaginative stories and persuasive writing. They use teacher feedback and self-assessment to reflect on how they can improve their writing. Moving forward, children across the school should be supported to improve the presentation of written work.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school children are developing very well their understanding of number, money and measure. Younger children recognise and sequence numbers confidently and have a strong understanding of time. A minority of children need to practise forming their numerals correctly to reduce reversals. Older children are increasing their understanding of mathematical language such as figure, product and difference. They would benefit from further practise in using fractions and solving word problems.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school children are developing age and stage appropriate knowledge and understanding of two-dimensional shapes. Younger children describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry and use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes. Older children confidently discuss, describe and classify angles using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Across the school children are not yet confident using mathematical language to describe the properties of three-dimensional objects.

Information handling

- Young children confidently use tally marks to collate the results of class surveys. Older children use a variety of methods such as bar graphs and Venn diagrams appropriately to display data. Across the school children would benefit from more opportunities to display information and data in different ways, including digitally, and to develop their understanding of chance and uncertainty.

Attainment over time

- The small school roll and numbers of children at each stage make it difficult to identify trends and patterns in attainment over time. Almost all children have maintained high standards of attainment over time.
- Senior leaders track and monitor very effectively the progress of individual children in literacy and numeracy. This, along with regular and robust tracking conversations with teachers, ensures that teachers are increasingly using data effectively. As a result, teachers identify any additional supports which may be required early and provide effective interventions to support children make progress. This is leading to consistently strong outcomes in literacy and numeracy for children. Targeted interventions are leading to raised attainment and reductions in the attainment gap in literacy for some children.
- Children's attendance at school in 2024/25 was 94.5%, in line with the national average. Senior leaders monitor children's attendance carefully, paying particular attention to different individuals and groups of children. Very few children have less than 90% attendance. Staff take appropriate steps, in line with local authority procedures, should any attendance concerns

arise. Children attending school on a part-time 'flexi' basis do so in accordance with local authority procedures. There have been no exclusions over the past few years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children value highly the recognition that staff place on their achievements both within and outwith school. They appreciate very much the recognition given to them for displaying the school values of kindness, inclusion, respect and perseverance.
- Staff, supported very effectively by a wide range of partners make very good use of the local area to provide high-quality activities and experiences for children. These include, for example, tree planting and storytelling at a local estate, the Kingsbarns beach clean-up and the whole school choir achieving significant success at the Fife music festival. As a result, children are developing very well as responsible citizens, confident individuals and are, as effective contributors, playing a full part in their local community.
- A large number of children are actively involved in pupil leadership roles. These include, for example as, digital leaders, sports leaders and handwriting ambassadors. Through these roles children support others develop technology skills, learn about coaching and how to give effective feedback and work with others as peer mentors. Younger children take their responsibilities as 'Eco warriors' and 'playground pals' very seriously.
- Staff are at the early stages of recognising the skills that children are developing as a result of the wide range of activities undertaken. Moving forward senior leaders should consider how to track the skills that children are developing and, as appropriate, accredit their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a very clear understanding of the socio-economic context of the school and rural community. They know children and families very well and offer sensitive support to those who may require help. Staff consider effectively how to reduce the cost of the school day through well-considered plans focused on uniform, travel, access to clubs, food provided in school, home learning and ability to attend events outwith school. As a result, children participate in a wide range of projects, events and activities that help them make very good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) appropriately to provide additional staff hours. Staff deliver targeted interventions for identified children, to support transitions for identified children and to ensure all children access educational excursions and residential experiences as appropriate. For example, a few children have benefited from specific literacy interventions to accelerate their progress. This has had a positive impact on these children's progress in writing. Other children, who are reliant on school transport, have benefited physically and socially from accessing clubs and activities at lunch time.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children receive their curriculum entitlement to 1+2 languages. This is taught in a planned and progressive way. Children across the school learn French and older children also learn Spanish.
- Children have regular access to the school library and mobile library service which helps the promotion of reading for enjoyment.
- Children receive their entitlement to Religious and Moral education and benefit from established links with the local church. Children benefit from use of the church for whole school events and celebrations such as the P7 leavers' assembly.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop approaches to involve parents and pupils in more meaningful ways on how best to allocate PEF. This will allow the school community to share their thoughts and ideas on how funding could be spent.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.