

Summarised inspection findings

Menstrie Primary School

Clackmannanshire Council

18 November 2025

Key contextual information

Menstrie Primary School is a non-denominational primary school. It serves the village of Menstrie and surrounding rural area. The school shares a campus with Menstrie Early Learning Centre which is a standalone setting.

The headteacher has been in post since August 2010. Since February 2019 there has been instability in the staffing of the senior leadership team. The headteacher is supported by one full time equivalent (FTE) depute headteacher and two FTE principal teachers. Both teachers are class committed for 0.8 FTE.

The school roll is 238 children arranged across 12 classes. There are 3% of children who live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 1. The majority of children live in SIMD deciles 6 and 7. There are 35% of children who require additional support with their learning and 8% of children who are entitled to free school meals.

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 have established a warm, caring and inclusive ethos across the school. Children benefit from highly nurturing and supportive relationships with staff and each other. As a result, children have a strong sense of belonging to the school. Staff and children demonstrate successfully the school values of respect, resilience, integrity, happiness and achievement in their interactions with each other and visitors to the school. All staff and children work collaboratively to develop class charters successfully. They are developing well their knowledge and understanding of children's rights.
- Almost all children display high standards of positive behaviour consistently across the school. All staff and children are confident in using the guidelines in the 'Menstrie positive relationship blueprint'. Almost all children use these guidelines effectively to help them to manage strong emotions successfully and behave well. As a result, almost all children are polite, supportive and cooperate effectively when working together.
- In almost all lessons, children are engaged actively in their learning. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Children demonstrate a willingness to contribute to discussions and share their skills, knowledge and opinions well. In almost all lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. They share effectively the purpose of learning and support children to understand how they can be successful. Across the school, all teachers should involve children more fully in creating steps to success to achieve the planned learning. This should support children to identify and reflect on their own individual learning targets and develop further their understanding of their own progress.

- In almost all lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding. In a few lessons, teachers ask questions which encourage children to explain their thinking and make connections to learning. All staff should continue to develop further their questioning skills to deepen and extend children's thinking and analysis. Across the school, teachers need to ensure they provide greater challenge for most children who are capable of making better progress.
- All children in P1 have regular opportunities to learn effectively through play. Teachers have created a responsive, stimulating and well-resourced learning environment that promotes children's curiosity and exploration successfully. As planned, teachers should continue to develop a whole school approach to play. As children progress through the school, teachers should provide a greater balance of adult-initiated and child-led experiences. This should help all children to develop enquiry skills appropriately according to their age and stage.
- All teachers reviewed the learning environments across the school. As a result, they created well-organised, inviting learning environments. They use an agreed environmental strategy guide effectively to ensure a consistent visual environment for children across the school. This helps staff to ensure that learning environments meet all children's individual needs. As a result, children use the classroom spaces independently and confidently. All children are clear about the routine of the day and transition within the school day well. They learn in calm, productive, working environments. The school has received accreditation in creating communication friendly environments for learning.
- Almost all teachers use digital technology effectively to support and motivate children. For example, across the school children benefit from engaging with games and activities to reinforce their understanding. Older children use digital technology very well to extend their learning and reflect on their own individual targets. All staff need to build on this strong practice in the upper school to ensure it is embedded across all classes.
- All teachers use an appropriate range of summative assessment approaches, including National Assessments for Scotland, to assess children's progress. They use this assessment information well to identify children who require support with their learning. A few teachers make effective use of formative assessment information to directly influence teaching and learning. All teachers need to develop assessment approaches in which children can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in new and relevant contexts.
- Across the school, there is a strong ethos of staff collegiality and positive working relationships. Almost all teachers engage in regular moderation activity both at school and local authority level. For example, they recently worked with cluster colleagues to increase their understanding of national standards in writing and numeracy. As a result, teachers make professional judgements with increasing confidence and greater accuracy.
- All teachers use progression frameworks linked to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences, outcomes and national Benchmarks to plan learning and teaching effectively. They do so over a range of appropriate timescales. All teachers use such progression frameworks in literacy, numeracy and mathematics, health and wellbeing, digital technologies and French. For all other curriculum areas, they use an overview of CfE experiences and outcomes within each CfE level. This helps them to ensure all children experience learning in all experiences and outcomes as they progress through a CfE level. Senior leaders and teachers now need to develop progression frameworks to support planning in all curriculum areas. Teachers are beginning to include children in planning their own learning. They ask children what they already know and what they would like to learn next within selected class contexts for learning. This helps teachers plan learning in contexts which meets children's

interests and builds on their prior knowledge well. Teachers could provide children with more opportunities to plan their own learning across the curriculum. They should support children to lead and extend their own learning more often.

- Teachers work together effectively with parents and other professional agencies to develop clear plans for children who require additional support. They identify clear targets to be achieved within given timescales for children's learning which meets their individual needs. Teachers must ensure all targets are measurable. This should help them to evaluate children's progress further in their regular review meetings.
- Senior leaders and teachers meet four times a year to moderate teachers' planning, and track and monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy effectively. They gather clear information about each child's progress over time in these curriculum areas. They monitor children's wellbeing on a graded scale. Senior leaders and teachers identify successfully children with gaps in their learning or who are not making appropriate progress. They plan and provide effective targeted support which is helping to close gaps in children's learning and increase children's progress. As a next step, teachers need to track and monitor children's progress and attainment across all curriculum areas. This could help them to ensure all children make the best possible progress across all areas of the curriculum.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Almost all children in P1 achieved CfE early level in listening and talking, reading and numeracy. Most children in P1 achieved early level in writing. Most children in P4 and P7 achieved expected CfE levels in listening and talking, reading and numeracy. The majority of children in P4 and P7 children achieved the expected CfE level in writing. Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, most children make good progress in literacy and English. A few children make very good progress. A majority of children could be making even better progress.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen attentively and respond respectfully to both adults and peers. At early level, children communicate effectively and share ideas confidently. They need to develop these skills further to enable them to ask and answer questions about texts with increasing accuracy. At first level, most children read familiar texts aloud with appropriate fluency and expression. Children need to ask and respond to a wider range of question types to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the main ideas within spoken and written texts. At second level, most children speak confidently and articulately and explain reasons for their responses. They would now benefit from further opportunities to apply and extend these skills across a wider and more challenging range of contexts.

Reading

- At early level, most children are building their knowledge of sounds, letter patterns and common words. They are beginning to recognise these in simple texts. At first level, most children read aloud adding expression and showing understanding. They need to improve their skills in using context clues to read and understand unfamiliar, complex texts. At second level, most children offer a personal preference for the genre and style of books they read. They identify and summarise the main ideas of texts. Children at second level are less confident responding to a range of more challenging questions about texts, including inferential questions.

Writing

- Teachers are currently developing their approaches to the teaching of writing. This has led to raised attainment in writing in P1 in recent years. At early level, almost all children create their own stories and characters in imaginative ways. They use a pencil with increasing control and confidence. At first level, most children write well for a variety of different purposes. They successfully link sentences using appropriate connectives such as and, but and because. At

second level, most children use sentences of different lengths and vary sentence openings, to engage the reader. They use appropriate vocabulary in their writing to suit their purpose and audience. At first and second level, children need to develop their skills in engaging their reader further through improvements to the layout and presentation of written work. Across the school, children would benefit from increased personalisation and choice in their writing across the curriculum. Senior leaders should support teachers to continue to build on the effective practice developed in P1. This should ensure high levels of achievement and progress for all pupils as they progress through the school.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children make very good progress. A majority of children could be making even better progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children are confident counting forwards and backwards within 20 and can identify numbers in dot patterns without having to count. Almost all children at first level round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They are not yet confident at solving addition problems with three-digit whole numbers. At second level, most children round whole numbers to the nearest 1000, 10 000 and 100 000. They need to develop their skills in applying their knowledge of rounding to provide an estimate to a calculation.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and name two-dimensional shapes and their properties. They confidently use appropriate vocabulary to describe the position of an object. Children at first level name a range of three-dimensional (3D) objects. They need to develop their skills in using mathematical language to describe the properties of 3D objects. Most children at second level use mathematical language to classify a range of angles.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children apply counting skills to answer questions based on pictorial data. Almost all children at first level extract information from a variety of data sets. Most children at second level discuss the range of ways of collecting data in the most suitable way for a task. Across the school, all children would benefit from more opportunities to explore the different ways data can be collected and presented.

Attainment over time

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy over time is good. Senior leaders and staff track children's progress and attainment effectively in literacy and numeracy over time. They use information gathered well to identify gaps in children's learning and provide targeted support. Senior leaders analyse data effectively to gather information successfully about the progress of cohorts of children, such as those facing financial hardship. They focus targeted interventions well, which is helping them to close gaps between cohorts of children. Senior leaders need to ensure all children experience challenge at all times in their learning. This should help to improve children's attainment further.
- Children's attendance is above the national average and has remained steady for the last three years. There are robust processes in place to ensure a child's safety should they be absent from school. Senior leaders monitor children's attendance regularly. They identify those who require support to improve their attendance and provide effective targeted support. Almost all children who received targeted support have improved their attendance at school. Teachers work with the associated secondary school to create helpful enhanced transition programmes for children who require support to maintain their attendance. A few children have reduced

attendance due to term-time holidays. Senior leaders remind parents that term-time holiday absence is unauthorised and try to discourage such absence. There are currently no children who have a part-time timetable.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children are encouraged to share their wider achievements in class, through regular assemblies and wall displays. All staff encourage parents to share their child's wider achievements with the school. Children value the opportunity to have their successes celebrated in this way. Staff say that whole school accreditations for nurture and communication have had a significant positive impact on the ethos of the school.
- Staff and children have been successful in achieving gold level national sport accreditation on three occasions. All children have had the opportunity to participate in a range of activities including rugby, football, skiing and cycling. Older children have attended national team matches in rugby and women's football. Through these activities children are developing positive attitudes to health and fitness. All P7 pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential trip as part of their senior year, and all children experience an out-of-school trip each year. During these experiences children develop self-confidence and independence skills effectively. Staff ensure children's musical talents are developed through learning to play instruments and participating in a singing club. Most children develop as confident individuals through sharing their talents and performing for others. Senior leaders track children's participation in school extra-curricular activities. They need to use this information to help them ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in wider achievement activities. As planned, they should develop this further to identify and track the skills children are developing as they progress through the school.
- Staff provide all children from P2 to P7 opportunities to develop their leadership skills through a wide range of groups. Each group has created clear plans and targets for their work in the year ahead. They share these with all children and staff effectively in attractive wall displays. P1 children are leading the development of sign language within the school. All children are contributing effectively to the work of the school through these groups. The pupil council have worked with the local community council to make improvements to a local play park. Children in this group recognise the impact their voice can have on the wider community and are rightly proud of this work.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a strong knowledge of the socio-economic context of their school. They know their children and families well. They use this knowledge to provide sensitive and timely support when required. Senior leaders support families with the cost of the school day sensitively. This includes support with school uniform. The Parent Council provides a helpful budget for the school to support families confidentially where there is a need. All school activities are designed to be accessible to all children. School staff identify and source grants available from community organisations to support families effectively. This is helping to ensure that all children experience equity in accessing all aspects of education including activities and outings.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to support attainment in literacy and numeracy through providing additional staffing and resources. Senior leaders consult all teaching staff on plans for PEF spending. Senior leaders should develop consultation processes with all staff, parents and children when planning how to use PEF. As a result of targeted interventions funded by PEF, staff are closing gaps between and raising attainment of cohorts of children.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their entitlement to a 1+2 approach to modern languages. All children learn French progressively from P1 to P7. In addition, children in P5 to P7 learn Spanish. Children in P1 are also learning sign language.
- All children experience well-planned learning about religious and moral education and can participate in religious observance a few times each year.
- All children participate in two hours of high-quality physical education every week. This takes place in the gym hall and within the school grounds.
- Staff use the school grounds and the recently established polytunnel to provide opportunities for learning outdoors. Teachers should now explore ways to build and assess children's skills progressively within outdoor learning.
- Across the school, all children benefit from access to a wide range of interesting reading materials provided by the class and community library. Children enjoy choosing books to read for pleasure and are confident in explaining their preferences for different types of books. Children have regular opportunities for personal reading.

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.