

Summarised inspection findings

Torbain Primary School

Fife Council

20 May 2025

Key contextual information

Torbain Primary School is a non-denominational primary school in the town of Kirkcaldy, Fife. The roll is 503 children, arranged across 18 classes. Children from P2 upwards are located three-storey open plan building. The nursery and P1 classes are located single storey building within the school grounds.

Over the past two years the, now full-time headteacher shared the position with the previous headteacher who retired in January 2025. Since January, the headteacher's position has returned to a full-time post. The headteacher is supported by three depute headteachers, and two acting principal teachers who are funded by Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Almost half of teaching staff are working in the school on a temporary basis. Just under a half (47.4%) of children live in Social Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 4 and 5. Only 7.7% of children live in SIMD deciles 1 and 2. Around 26% of children require additional support.

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, strong, positive relationships between staff and children, and between children, are evident. The effective teamwork of all staff serves to strengthen these relationships. Staff know children very well, enabling them to be responsive to the needs of individuals. The school's values underpin the nurturing and inclusive culture and ethos of the school. Children understand and demonstrate the values of honesty, fairness, friendship and respect. These values are embedded in the daily life of the school. Children are increasingly able to talk about their rights and how these apply to themselves and others. Attractive 'Class Charter' displays in every class support children to develop and apply their understanding of rights. Children are keen to share their learning and are proud of their school.
- Staff's consistent application of an agreed environmental framework is successfully ensuring that classroom environments are nurturing and inclusive. All children have easy access to a quiet, calm space. Staff are sensitive to the specific needs of individual children who require additional support. When required, skilled staff support children successfully to regulate their behaviour. Staff's implementation of a range of nurture strategies is impacting positively on developing children's ability to engage, attend and regulate their own behaviour.
- Overall, standards of behaviour across the school are good. In the majority of lessons, learning activities are appropriately matched to most children's needs. Children begin to disengage when learning is overly-teacher led or is insufficiently challenging. This results in a few children demonstrating unsettled behaviours. Across all stages, staff should encourage children to be more active and independent in their learning.

- Teachers use a range of formative assessment strategies appropriately to check children's understanding. However, in a minority of lessons, this could be used to better inform the pace of learning. Most teachers use praise well and provide supportive verbal feedback to children to help them understand their next steps. Teachers should develop further the quality of their written feedback to ensure it is clear and specific. Children would benefit from being encouraged to act upon this advice more regularly.
- Children enjoy working in pairs and groups. They are developing their skills and confidence in assessing their own learning and that of their peers. Children set learning targets within their learning journeys. Staff should now support children to make their targets more specific and measurable. Staff could better support children's self-assessment and target setting by using more child-friendly language.
- Staff's application of the 'Torbain Learning Model' is improving the consistency of children's learning experiences across the school. It supports staff and children to have a shared understanding of what high quality learning and teaching looks like. A visual representation of the model is highly visible across the school. Staff's use of visual symbols to represent each part of the model supports children to develop children's understanding of the process of learning. In all lessons, staff share the purpose of learning with children. In a few lessons, staff involve children in identifying how they will know that they have been successful. Teachers use questioning well in most lessons to re-cap prior learning and to check for understanding. In a minority of lessons, teachers use a range of questioning techniques well to develop children's higher order thinking.
- The 'Torbain 5C's' (Concentration, Curiosity, Creativity, Communication and Critical thinking) are successfully supporting children's developing understanding of skills for learning, life and work. Children are increasingly able to identify which of the '5C's' they are applying in their learning. Building on this positive start, staff should develop further the range of learning experiences provided, to ensure the progressive development of skills. Staff's increasing use of the outdoor learning environment and local community to provide stimulating and motivating contexts for children's learning could support them to do this. Staff's assessment and tracking of children's skills development is at an early stage of development.
- Teachers use digital technology very effectively to support and extend children's learning. Children use devices and applications independently to access and apply learning across the curriculum. The 'Torbain Techies' support their peers and staff to develop new digital skills, such as coding, accessing new applications and extending the range of technology used. Children who require support with learning, use appropriate digital technology to remove barriers to learning.
- Staff plan opportunities for children at all levels to engage in play-based learning activities. At early level, approaches to learning through play have a positive impact on children's ability to apply and extend their learning in a range of motivating contexts. Children's curiosity and creativity is encouraged through attractive, motivating and stimulating environments. At first and second level, staff are at the early stages of developing learning through play, in line with their 'play rationale'. Staff should continue to engage with national practice guidance, build on practice within early years and continue to look outwards to other schools. Children would benefit from more open-ended enquiry tasks that promote greater challenge and independence in learning as they progress through the school.
- Staff employ a variety of assessment approaches, including formative, summative and standardised assessment. This includes pre- and post-topic assessments designed for specific blocks of learning across a range of curriculum areas. Staff use the outcomes of assessment

appropriately to inform the provision of supports and interventions. Staff should further review their use of assessment data to ensure children experience sufficient pace and challenge in their learning. The majority of children feel that their work is hard enough only some of the time or not very often.

- Staff across the school have regular, planned opportunities to moderate children's work, including between and across stages. They meet with colleagues from cluster schools to moderate literacy and numeracy at points across the year. P7 staff engage in moderation activities with teachers in neighbouring schools. This is supporting the development of a shared understanding of national standards as children transfer to secondary school. As a result, teachers' professional judgements in literacy and numeracy are becoming increasingly robust. They should now extend this to include the other areas of the curriculum.
- Senior leaders provide clear guidance that ensures consistency of planning across the school. Staff plan across different timescales. Staff work collegiately to produce an annual overview of learning at the start of the school session. In addition, they prepare termly plans, and short-term responsive planning. Staff make effective use of progression pathways and national Benchmarks to inform their planning across all areas of the curriculum. Most children feel that staff ask them about what they would like to learn, involving them in the planning process. There is potential to strengthen this even further.
- Senior leaders and teachers hold effective 'pace and progress' tracking meetings each term. Together, they discuss the impact of planned learning on children's progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff use data effectively and with increasing confidence to inform these discussions. In addition, support for learning staff have regular consultations with teachers to ensure effective interventions and support strategies are in place. All staff use the new local authority 'PROGRESS' tracking system to track progress of all children across the curriculum and ensure they are making progress from prior levels of attainment. This is beginning to support staff to measure children's progress across the curriculum in line with national expectations. Senior leaders should strengthen further how the progress of children in receipt of additional support is tracked. Staff are at the very early stages of tracking children's progress across other 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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

- Most children at P1, P4 and P7 achieve expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in listening and talking. The majority of children at P1 and P4, and most children by P7 attain expected levels in reading and writing. Most children at P1 and P7 attain expected levels in numeracy. At P4, the majority of children attain the expected level in numeracy. A few children exceed expected national levels. However, with increased pace and challenge, a few children are capable of making even better progress.
- Most children who require support with their learning are making good progress towards their own individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen well and can articulate their thoughts and opinions. At early level, almost all children take turns and listen carefully to the contributions of others. They engage well with stories and re-enact them using role play and puppets with increasing confidence. At first level, most children select a text and give simple reasons for their choice. At second level, most children articulate and express their views confidently. They interact well with each other and build on ideas of their peers by adding additional information. The majority recognise techniques which engage the listener, for example, tone and vocabulary. Children should continue to develop their application of these techniques through their engagement with an increasing range of contexts.

Reading

- At early level, most children use contexts cues to support their understanding of different types of text. They apply these skills in real-life contexts during play-based activities to read, for example, menus and letters. At first level, the majority of children read with increasing fluency. They decode unknown words by locating and pronouncing familiar letter patterns and blends. They identify key information in fiction and non-fiction texts using features such as contents page and sub-headings. They should strengthen further their ability to answer literal, inferential and evaluative questions about texts. At second level, most children explain their preferences for text types and authors confidently. They read with fluency, understanding and expression, using punctuation and layout to help them. They can distinguish between fact and opinion with appropriate explanation. They are beginning to use critical thinking skills to consider whether what they read is reliable. Children should develop further their ability to summarise text.

Writing

- At early level, most children form letters correctly and are beginning to use capital letters, full stops and finger spaces appropriately. They write to convey ideas and messages and information in different ways through play, imaginative and real contexts. Children at first and second level develop their knowledge of phonics and spelling strategies when spelling words in isolation. They now need to apply these developing spelling skills to more general writing tasks with greater accuracy. Children write regularly at length for a range of purposes, using appropriate planning techniques. They should continue to develop their use of sentences of different lengths and types and increase the variety of sentence openers.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of learning and attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children identify and order numbers from 0-20 and most identify the number before and after a given number. They accurately add two numbers within 20. At first level, children successfully round numbers to the nearest 10 or 100 and add and subtract up to 999. They use analogue and digital clocks to correctly tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to. Children are less confident in their understanding of fractions. At second level, most pupils are confident with place value within 100,000. Children understand the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals. At first and second level, children should now strengthen their ability to solve word problems through the application of their numeracy skills.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children continue, describe, and create patterns with accuracy. They name, identify and classify a range of two-dimensional shapes. They use the language of position and direction to programme digital toys, including forwards, backwards, left, right. At first and second level, children use mathematical language correctly to describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They accurately identify lines of symmetry and create symmetrical images. They are beginning to extend their knowledge of angles and positional language. At second level, children are less confident when discussing, describing, and classifying angles using mathematical language.

Information handling

- At early level, most children create simple charts and pictorial displays well. At first level, most children use information and create bar graphs successfully. They ask and answer questions about the graphs they make and read. At second level, most children interpret data accurately from information presented in a range of charts and graphs. They should further develop their understanding of mean, median and mode.

Attainment over time

- Over time, most children make good progress towards achieving expected CfE levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Children's levels of attainment dip in reading, writing and numeracy as they move from early to first level. Their levels of attainment then improve as they progress from first to second level. The headteacher should ensure that reporting of achievement of a level data includes all aspects of numeracy and mathematics in accordance with the national Benchmarks.
- Senior leaders use a comprehensive system to monitor and track children's attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. They are at the very early stages of tracking children's progress in the other areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders meet teachers, and support for learning staff regularly to monitor the progress of children who are not on track with their

learning. Senior leaders and support for learning teachers analyse data to track the progress of individuals and identified groups of children. This enables them to identify appropriate interventions to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. As a result, these children make good progress in reading, writing and numeracy. However, this needs to link more closely with class teacher's planning. Senior leaders should ensure that teachers use the assessment of children in receipt of additional support more effectively to inform their planning. This could better inform the rate of progress children are making over time ensure that all children make the best possible progress in their learning.

- Senior leaders use attendance data very well to identify children who require support to improve attendance. Attendance in session 2022/23 was 90.5%. It increased in session 2023/24 to 92.2%% which is higher than the national average. There have been no exclusions in the last six years. Senior leaders monitor and track attendance monthly and for individual children. They act promptly where individual attendance dips below 90%. Staff provide targeted interventions, to help improve children's attendance. This includes engagement and support for individual children and families. Support for children's emotional wellbeing is provided through a range of very effective interventions. These interventions are having a positive impact on attendance of individual children over time. There are a few children on a part time timetable. Staff monitor and review these part-time arrangements in accordance with local authority procedures.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff celebrate children's achievements in a variety of ways across the school, including at assemblies, through awards and attractive wall displays. Staff track children's wider achievements against the CfE four capacities, and the skills associated with the 'Torbain five C's.' This supports staff to identify children at risk of missing out and provide opportunities for them. All teachers work with a range of partners to plan and deliver a range of opportunities through which children can achieve. Teachers' responsibility for leading clubs is built into their working time agreement.
- Children speak enthusiastically about the range of leadership opportunities provided to them. Class representatives undertaking ambassadors' roles contribute to the promotion of specific areas of work across the school, such as sustainability and languages. Children gain a range of skills through these leadership responsibilities. They take pride in their contribution to the school community and their growth as responsible citizens. For example, through running the community café and organising litter picks.
- Children benefit from a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills through sports activities, including sports taster sessions. The school's recent achievement of the School Sport Award, gold level reflects this. Effective partnership working enhances the breadth of opportunities provided, such as the development of golf. Children demonstrate teamwork through their engagement in fun events and competitions. Overall, children understand how these activities and events contribute to their health and wellbeing. Almost all children feel that the school provides opportunities to get regular exercise.
- Children have increasing opportunities to develop their performance skills, for example, through instrumental tuition and participation in the Fife music festival. Staff have developed strong links with St Andrews University Music Participation and Dysart Brass Band. Children at P6 have developed confidence and musical skills through their participation in the 'Discovering Brass' project.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff are committed to ensuring equity for all learners. They have a sound understanding of the socio-economic background of children and families and the challenges that affect the school community. Staff analyse data effectively to identify children who are impacted by socio-economic circumstances and inform support provision. Staff take appropriate steps to ensure that all children participate fully in all aspects of school life, such as subsidising school trips. They support families through the provision the 'nurture breakfast club, digital devices and school-based experiences.
- The headteacher uses PEF well to fund additional staffing who provide well-planned, targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These targeted interventions are impacting positively on children's levels of engagement, attendance and attainment. Staff should continue to monitor closely the impact these interventions.

Other relevant evidence

- Teachers make appropriate use of a progressive learning pathway across all levels to support them to planning high quality physical education (PE). All teachers use this to ensure children receive two hours of high-quality PE.
- Staff deliver the national 1+2 approach to modern languages effectively. Children in all classes learn French in a planned progressive way. Children at the upper stages also learn Spanish.
- Children benefit from a well-stocked school library and individual class libraries. There is a range of texts to support children to learn across different areas of the curriculum. Children would welcome greater involvement in the selection of books within the library.
- Children receive religious and moral education through planned learning opportunities to learn about different religious beliefs.
- The headteacher consults staff on how PEF will be allocated. She should continue to involve parents and pupils in planning and evaluating the use of PEF.

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.