

Summarised inspection findings

Kilmaurs Primary School

East Ayrshire Council

18 November 2025

Key contextual information

Kilmaurs Primary School is a non-denominational school in the village of Kilmaurs, East Ayrshire. Over the past three years, the school has benefitted from a refurbishment programme to improve classrooms, offices and toilets.

The established headteacher has been in post for five years. She is supported by a deputy headteacher and an acting principal teacher in leading and managing the school. The acting principal teacher and five new teachers joined the school in August 2025.

At the time of inspection, the school roll was 209 children across nine classes. A minority of children across the school have additional support needs. In September 2024, almost all children lived in quintiles two and three, and a few children lived in quintiles one, four and five of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. In September 2024, 15% of P6-P7 children were registered for free school meals.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It 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

- Children learn in a caring and inclusive environment. Most staff and children share mutually respectful and positive relationships. Staff have undertaken professional learning which they have used to create supportive learning environments. Children enjoy opportunities to work individually, in pairs and groups. They access 'Terrific Toolkits' of resources which are readily available in all classrooms to support learning and engagement across the curriculum. Staff engaged effectively in developing their practice and created consistent approaches to relationships and behaviour across the school. For example, children benefit from visual timetables, identified resources and calm corners. Most children across the school behave well.
- Children across the school contribute effectively to the work of the school and wider community. Senior pupils take on the roles of house captains and playground buddies. All children are members of school community leadership groups. These groups are having a positive impact in the community, for example by developing a local woodland area. Overall, children feel that they have opportunities to put forward their views and that their opinions are taken into account.
- Staff ensure that children's rights permeates all aspects of school life. They support this well through class charters, regular assembly input and rights themed days. Children talk about their rights and give examples of what these mean and how they are relevant to their lives. This work has been awarded national accreditation. As a result, almost all children recognise the school helps them to understand and respect other people.

- Most teachers provide children with clear, helpful instructions during whole class lessons. However, in most classes, children are not always clear on the purpose of their learning. A few teachers involve children in identifying how they will know if they have been successful. Teachers now need to develop their explanations of learning further to support children to know what they are learning and why.
- Across the school, children's engagement in learning is variable. Often children lose interest and disengage from their learning during lessons. Too often, lessons are overly teacher led. Together, teachers should review the balance between teacher-directed and learner-led activities to improve the pace of learning and provide consistently high quality progressive learning. In a few lessons, teachers provide activities that are appropriately challenging. In these examples, children lead their own learning at a pace which suits their ability. However, in almost all lessons, activities are not yet of a high enough quality to meet the needs of all children. Teachers need to provide tasks and activities which are better matched to children's needs. They should ensure all children experience the right level of support and challenge in their learning. This should enable all children to make the best possible progress.
- Teachers have developed a useful document explaining what high-quality learning and teaching should look like across the school. This shared standard is not yet embedded in teachers' practice. The headteacher should support teachers to strengthen their understanding of the key features of effective learning and teaching. Teachers should reflect on their practice using research and professional reading and consider highly effective practice in other schools. This should help develop consistent high-quality learning and teaching across the school.
- Most children respond well to teachers' explanations. Most often, teachers ask simple questions to check children's understanding and recap prior learning. Teachers should now develop further their questioning skills. They should use a greater range of questions that promote and develop children's curiosity and critical thinking skills.
- Across the school, children are involved in setting learning targets in literacy and numeracy. These are displayed in classrooms where most children refer to them. Most children know what target they are working towards. In most lessons, children have opportunities to self- and peer-assess their work and to reflect on the skills they are developing.
- Most staff give children helpful praise and encouragement during lessons. They provide feedback and supportive comments in children's jotters. Overall, teachers' written feedback is not yet of a consistent high standard across the school. Teachers should now strengthen the quality of feedback they provide to ensure all children understand their strengths and what they need to improve.
- Teachers are implementing a play-based approach to learning at P1 and P2. They have developed a shared play area which is timetabled. This is beginning to support children with opportunities for creativity, discovery and curiosity. Teachers now need to ensure that children experience developmentally appropriate learning activities which enhance their engagement and progress in learning. They need to review all learning environments to provide a better mix of adult-initiated and open-ended child-initiated activities. Senior leaders and teachers should engage with national guidance and professional learning to develop their understanding of high-quality play and the role of the adult to support this work.
- Children welcome opportunities to learn outdoors. Staff plan outdoor learning utilising the playground, the nearby Jubilee Woods and Morton Park. The Community Hawks pupil group is at the early stages of developing further outdoor learning within the local area. Teachers at all

stages should now work together to develop a progressive framework for outdoor learning to ensure children build on their existing skills and prior learning.

- Across the school, teachers and children feedback regularly to parents about their child's learning using a digital platform. In almost all lessons, teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support whole class lessons. Children in P6 and P7 have access to their own individual digital device provided by the school. Children at other stages have access to shared devices. A few teachers use digital technology effectively to enhance children's learning experiences. In a few classes, children use digital technologies well to support their learning. Staff should now adopt a consistent approach to improving the use of digital technology. They should ensure that digital technology enhances learning and supports children to develop their digital skills progressively.
- Staff follow an assessment calendar which outlines the standardised and summative assessments in literacy and numeracy to be administered at agreed times across the year. They use a range of assessments and classwork to understand children's progress. The headteacher should now work with staff to gather robust evidence of children's progress and attainment. She should ensure teachers use this information more effectively to plan learning that meets the needs of all children.
- Teachers have recently revised their approaches to planning. They plan learning over the long, medium and short term using the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). The headteacher protects time for staff to share practice and plan together.
- Teachers are familiar with the national Benchmarks and are undertaking moderation activities at school and with colleagues from other local schools. This is supporting them to develop a clearer understanding of when children have achieved a level. As planned, the headteacher should continue to provide moderation activities to improve further teachers' confidence in what achievement of level looks like.
- Senior leaders meet with teachers termly to discuss children's progress in learning. Teachers share and analyse attainment information during these meetings to track how well children are progressing. This results in teachers deploying in-class interventions well to support children who require additional support in their learning. Teachers should now develop a more streamlined approach to gathering information about children's learning. This should enable them to track and monitor children's progress more effectively. They need to analyse this information more robustly. They should ensure all children make the best possible progress in their learning, including those who require greater challenge in learning.

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.
- Following the inspection the education authority, working with the school, have taken forward areas for improvement in safeguarding which required urgent action. HM Inspectors have reviewed information relating to these areas for improvement. HM Inspectors are satisfied with the response taken by the education authority and do not require any further information.

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, most children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. A few children at all levels are capable of achieving more.
- Children who require additional support in their learning are making good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children at early and first levels are making satisfactory progress. Most children at second level are making good progress in literacy and English. Across all levels, a few children are capable of making better progress.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children hear and say the different single sounds made by letters. They follow simple instructions. They would benefit from developing further their listening and talking skills. At first level, most children speak confidently in groups, taking turns and contributing at appropriate times. At second level, most children contribute relevant ideas, information and opinions during discussions. Across first and second levels, children would benefit from further planned opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills across all areas of the curriculum and with a wider audience.

Reading

- Across the school, children are very proud of their recently renovated library area. The library is well-stocked with a range of texts available for children to select from. This is supporting all children well in developing their enjoyment of reading.
- Most children who have achieved early level understand the difference between letters, words and numbers. They blend letters to make simple words. They are becoming more aware of the different features of fiction and non-fiction texts. At first level, most children explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. They read familiar texts aloud with close attention to simple punctuation. They are less confident in answering literal and inferential questions about texts. At second level, most children skim and scan texts to identify the purpose and main ideas. They are less confident in reading aloud with expression to engage the listener.

Writing

- Most children who have achieved early level write words from left to right forming letters correctly. They would benefit from more opportunities to develop their writing in a range of contexts. At first level, most children create a variety of texts for different purposes. They demonstrate increasing understanding of sentence construction and link ideas in sentences.

They would benefit from further opportunities to take notes to support them to plan their writing. At second level, most children make effective use of vocabulary choice to engage the reader. They are beginning to use a range of language techniques effectively, for example simile and onomatopoeia. They would benefit from further opportunities to practise the correct use of speech marks and apostrophes. Across first and second levels, children should be encouraged to take greater pride in the presentation of their work. They would benefit from greater guidance in how to present their writing in a fluent and legible way.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children at early and first levels are making satisfactory progress. Most children at second level are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across all levels, a few children are capable of making better progress.

Number, money and measure

- Most children who have achieved early level, add mentally to 10. They count forwards and backwards from 20. Children are not yet confident to subtract within 10. Almost all children know the names of the days of the week in sequence. They are less familiar with the months and seasons of the year. At first level, most children round numbers to the nearest 100 and order numbers to 1000 accurately. They apply their mental agility skills well when calculating costs up to £10. They require further practise of two-step problems. At second level, most children use a range of strategies successfully to solve number problems and describe their processes. They are less confident when working with fractions and decimals.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children who have achieved early level describe common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects using the terms straight, round, flat and curved. At first level, most children name and identify 2D shapes and 3D objects using correct mathematical language. They are less confident with compass points and finding right angles. At second level, most children draw correct representations of 3D objects. They would benefit from further practise discussing the properties of these objects using mathematical terms, such as regular and irregular.

Information handling

- Children who have achieved early level match and sort information according to specific criteria. They would benefit from further opportunities to create pictorial displays, such as bar graphs. At first level, most children extract key information accurately from an increasing variety of charts and graphs. At second level, most children understand how to gather, sort and display information. They would benefit from opportunities to apply this knowledge further in practical information handling tasks, including using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Over time, the school's overall average for attendance remains consistently above the national average. Currently, children's attendance across the school is 94.8%. Across all stages, 19% of children have an absence of 10% or more. There are no children who attend school on a part-time basis. The headteacher monitors closely the absence and lateness of individual children. She is proactive in understanding the reasons behind children's individual absences. Absences are mainly due to term-time holidays and adverse family circumstances. The headteacher and staff work effectively with partners to support families to improve attendance rates for individual children. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funds (PEF) to employ a part-time home-link worker to engage with and support parents and offer targeted support to improve children's attendance. This work is at the early stages and has the potential to improve further the attendance of those children.

- The headteacher and teachers gather a range of attainment data for individual children in literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics and wellbeing over time. They use this data effectively to analyse the attainment of individual children and specific cohorts and groups. As children progress through early and first levels, attainment is not maintained. The headteacher uses this analysis well to provide appropriate interventions for children who are not on track in their learning. As a result, children who receive targeted support make good progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their achievements in and out of school. They experience success in a range of after school clubs and local competitions. Senior leaders recognise the achievements of children at weekly celebration assemblies, through displays, and superstar awards linked to the four CfE capacities. Staff encourage parents and children to share achievements from outside the school, via an online platform. Children appreciate their work and achievements being highlighted within the local community. For example, P6 and P7 classes display projects that showcase their photography skills and their understanding of local history in the village's community-run exhibition space, The Jougs.
- Staff record and monitor children's achievements using a whole-school tracker. Senior leaders review children's achievements termly to identify who may be at risk of missing out. Staff should now track and discuss with children the skills that they develop as a result of their achievements. This should support children to build further on their understanding of skills for learning, life and work.
- Across the school, children increasingly demonstrate their collaboration and communication skills through leadership groups. They choose which group they wish to be part of based on their own areas of interest, for example, Rights Respecting Group, Community Hawks, Numeracy Masters, and Healthy Heroes. Teachers support these multi-stage groups to share their actions with others in the school and, increasingly, to the wider community. Children enjoy developing confidence, teamwork and responsibility skills through these groups. P7 pupils volunteer as a 'playground pal' or P1 buddy. These opportunities support children well to develop further their leadership skills and a sense of pride in their school community.

Equity for all learners

- Almost all staff have a sound understanding of the socio-economic background of all children and their families. The headteacher uses PEF to enhance staffing and to purchase resources to support the delivery of the curriculum. This is supporting children well across the school in their learning. The headteacher and staff should now consult more widely with families to determine how this funding should be spent. They should ensure that it is targeted more closely to raise the attainment of those children who have barriers to learning as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. This should ensure the pace of closing the poverty-related attainment gap increases.
- Staff across the school support families discreetly and very effectively in reducing the cost of the school day. For example, supports offered include a free breakfast club for all children, a selection of pre-loved school uniform, a family food bank and a selection of seasonal clothes. As a result, parents are supported very well, and the cost of the school day is not a barrier to children's outcomes.

Other relevant evidence

- Across the school, children learn French in line with the Scottish Government's 1+2 modern language policy. The headteacher should now ensure that P5-7 children receive their entitlement to a third language in line with this guidance.
- Teachers plan Religious and Moral Education discretely and through learning across a few areas of the curriculum. Children learn about Christianity and world faiths. This is supporting children well to develop their understanding of different religious beliefs across the world.
- All children have access to two hours of high-quality physical education every week. Almost all children feel the school provides them regular opportunities to exercise and teaches them to be healthy.
- 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the local authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- The Parent Council are actively involved in agreeing and supporting school priorities. They raise funds through the annual Christmas fayre, partnerships with local businesses and other events in the school's community room. They use funds to provide resources such as books and decorations to enhance the school library and make it a more welcoming space. This is helping to promote a love of reading for enjoyment among children. Volunteers from the wider parent body also donate their time and resources to support improvement plan targets. For example, volunteers converted a previously unused room in the school to provide a safe and dignified changing area for children. This develops further feelings of inclusion and value amongst children.

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.