

Summarised inspection findings

Killearn Primary School

Stirling Council

20 January 2026

Key contextual information

Killearn Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in Killearn. It serves the village of Killearn and the surrounding rural area. The school roll is 178 arranged across seven classes. The headteacher has been in post for 14 years and is supported by a depute headteacher and a principal teacher. Almost all children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 7 to 10. Across the school, a few children are registered for free school meals. The headteacher reports that 41% of children require additional support with their learning. A few children have English as an additional language.

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

- Children benefit from the strong, positive relationships they have with each other and staff. Children are very proud of their school community. They are articulate and well-mannered and welcome visitors warmly to their school. Teachers support children to create and agree class charters, linked to the school values and children's rights. The school values are embedded in the work of the school. Children have a good understanding of the school values and demonstrate these well in class.
- Staff work well together to establish inclusive and supportive learning environments. Staff use a toolkit to evaluate the classrooms to ensure these are inclusive. They use quiet space, visual prompts and emotional check-ins to help children manage their feelings. This approach supports children's engagement and readiness to learn. Across all classes, children behave very well and engage positively in their learning experiences. Staff use a range of nurturing approaches effectively to provide a calm and supportive learning climate.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations and make appropriate links to prior learning. Overall, they use questioning well to check children's understanding and to extend their thinking. Teachers routinely share the purpose of learning and ways that children can be successful. Increasingly, children help to co-create steps to success. This supports children to understand what they are learning and how to be successful. Staff should continue to encourage children to become more independent in their learning.
- Most teachers use formative assessment strategies effectively to identify children's understanding and adjust approaches to learning and teaching accordingly. Most teachers provide helpful written and oral feedback to support children's understanding. Staff should

continue to strengthen the consistency of this practice across the school. Children have regular opportunities to self-assess and peer-assess their learning. Teachers should develop further the use of learner conversations in supporting children to identify and agree their next steps.

- Staff make effective use of interactive boards to support learning and teaching and engage children in their learning. Most children regularly access digital tools to enhance their learning. Staff use digital technology well to help children remove barriers to learning. For example, the use of technology enables a few children to experience success when creating text. This supports children to communicate their thoughts and ideas more easily. Staff recognise the need to develop children's digital skills in a more planned and progressive way.
- Staff working at the early stages are engaging with professional learning to support the development of play. They have recently created a dedicated playroom to increase children's opportunities for play. Younger children access this play area regularly through the week. They also have opportunities to learn through play in their own classes. Children demonstrate a high level of independence and motivation during play activities. They cooperate well with their peers to take forward ideas. Staff play alongside children to develop and extend their play. As planned, teachers should provide play activities that are more responsive to children's interests and ideas.
- Staff use the extensive school grounds well to provide regular, enjoyable outdoor learning experiences. Children benefit from ready access to a grassed area, trees and garden. Community partners enhance the range of outdoor learning experiences provided. Children's knowledge of their local area is enhanced through this effective partnership working. Most children speak positively about how learning outdoors helps to support their wellbeing. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to ensure that children develop their skills progressively through outdoor learning experiences.
- Teachers have recently begun to implement a digital approach to planning learning. This is beginning to provide teachers with a clearer picture of children's learning across all stages. Teachers plan over a range of appropriate timescales using local authority progression pathways for all curriculum areas. Teachers increasingly use the views of children to inform planned learning, ensuring learning is relevant and interesting. In a few classes, children have opportunities to create 'big questions' at the start of new topics. Teachers should continue to build on this practice to increase children's opportunities for personalisation and choice.
- All teachers use an annual assessment calendar which outlines assessment expectations. They use a range of summative, diagnostic and standardised assessment activities across the year to gather information about children's progress and to inform planning. Teachers engage in moderation activities, both within the school and with colleagues across their local learning community. Senior leaders should continue to provide opportunities for staff to engage in moderation activities to strengthen further teacher's professional judgements in line with national expectations. This should better inform the pace of learning and the level of challenge provided.

- Teachers meet with senior leaders and support for learning teachers each term. They discuss children's progress and identify potential gaps and barriers to children's learning. Staff have begun to use the local authority's new tracking tool to track the progress of individual learners and cohorts of children. They use this information well to provide a range of appropriate universal and targeted interventions to support identified children. Senior leaders should now develop further ways to evaluate the impact of these interventions.
- Senior leaders have established effective approaches to help children who require additional support with their learning. Learning support teachers work effectively with staff to enable children to make the best possible progress. In addition to working directly with children, they also provide helpful support and guidance to staff. Staff work effectively as a team to meet the needs of children well. Pupil support assistants work effectively in partnership with teachers to support children through a range of targeted interventions in literacy and numeracy.

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, young people. 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, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. At P1, P4 and P7 almost all children achieve expected CfE levels in listening and talking. In P1, almost all children achieve expected levels in reading and numeracy. Most children in P1 achieve expected levels in writing. At P4, the majority of children achieve expected levels in reading and writing. Most children at P4 achieve expected levels in numeracy. At P7, most children achieve expected levels in reading, writing and numeracy.
- Across all stages, a minority of children could achieve more. A few children are achieving beyond the levels reported by staff. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to strengthen further their professional judgement in line with national expectations.
- Most children who require additional support for their learning, are making good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children listen to adults and their peers and follow instructions well. At first level, almost all children are confident with the skills of good listening and talking. They identify the difference between fact and opinion accurately. At second level, almost all children show respect for the views of others and give good feedback to their peers. They speak with confidence when sharing information and build appropriately on the ideas of others. At first and second levels children should develop further the use of note taking skills to organise and understand ideas and information.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children enjoy reading and listening to a range of texts. They hear and say sounds made by a combination of letters. They should continue to share their thoughts and feelings about stories and other texts. At first level, the majority of children discuss their favourite authors and make predictions using contextual clues. They identify the

difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. They should continue to practise answering inferential questions about texts. At second level, most children are developing well skills in scanning texts to find key information. They should continue to develop their experience of answering evaluative questions about texts.

Writing

- At early level, most children use capital letters and full stops accurately to punctuate sentences. They use their knowledge of common words and known sounds to spell familiar words correctly and write simple sentences. At first level, the majority of children have a secure understanding of writing character descriptions using an appropriate structure. They plan and create texts using adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions effectively. At second level, most children know and apply the techniques of persuasive writing such as emotional appeal or repetition very well. They should continue to develop a range of emotive and figurative language in their writing to engage, persuade or influence the reader. Across the school, handwriting and presentation of written work is of a very high standard.

Numeracy and mathematics

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

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children count confidently to 20. They count on and back from a number and identify the missing number in a sequence. At first level, most children round whole numbers to the nearest 100. They are confident in addition and subtraction of two-digit numbers. They add amounts of money to pay for items. They are less confident when calculating the amount of change from £10. At second level, most children complete number calculations with confidence and explain the strategies they use. Most children solve fraction calculations well and calculate simple percentages of a number. They contribute to discussions about the importance of mathematics in the past and present day.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children identify two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects correctly. They use their knowledge of 3D objects well to build structures as part of their play experiences. At first level, most children identify a right angle. They name and describe simple 3D objects and their properties accurately. They identify compass points with ease. They are less confident identifying and using grid references. At second level, most children confidently recognise acute, obtuse and reflex angles. They recognise the link between angles and compass points and use appropriate vocabulary to describe directions.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children use their counting skills to identify the most and least popular items on a simple pictograph. They gathered information on eye colours and recorded this using a class pictograph. They identify and create symmetrical pictures with ease. At first level, most children confidently interpret simple bar graphs. Most children at second level, use language of probability accurately to describe the likelihood of simple

events. Children at first and second levels would benefit from greater opportunities to use digital technology to collect, organise and display information.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have implemented effective systems to track and monitor children's attainment levels over time. They analyse data well to consider patterns in children's progress. Overall, data shows that most children maintain expected national standards of attainment as they progress through the school. However, there is a dip in literacy and numeracy at first level. Staff are taking appropriate action to address this. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to support teachers in analysing and using data to maximise the progress of all children.
- Attendance has been consistently above local and national average in recent years. In session 2024/25 overall attendance was 96.6%. The headteacher has robust daily procedures in place for checking the safety of children who are absent from school. A few children currently have attendance less than 90%. Staff work closely with parents to provide targeted and effective support to help children to attend school. This includes daily discussions with children to build confidence in coming to school, soft starts and support for families with daily routines. There are no children attending school on part time timetables.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children have regular opportunities to share their achievements from in and out of school. Achievements are celebrated in assemblies, classes and school displays. Children receive a variety of school awards such as the headteacher's awards and also 'spotted' awards for demonstrating the school values. Children are proud to have achieved a range of local and national accreditations, including awards for sustainability, sports and reading.
- Children participate and engage in a range of clubs, such as football, thinkers' club, and a national award-winning lacrosse team. These clubs support children well to develop their confidence, teamwork and communication skills.
- All children participate in a wide range of leadership and pupil groups, including house captains, pupil council and sports leaders. They play an active role in leading and promoting whole school and community initiatives, for example, the Killearn Advent windows. Children develop valuable leadership skills as a result of the roles and responsibilities they experience.
- The headteacher records children's achievements and participation in clubs and activities. She targets support effectively to those children not participating in activities and at risk of missing out. Staff should now discuss and track the skills children are gaining from their achievements and link these to skills for learning, life and work. This should help children to make further links between their achievements, learning and progress.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff know their children and families very well and are aware of the context of the school community. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) well to fund interventions for identified children and to provide universal support across the school. Senior

leaders plan to enhance further consultation approaches with parents, pupils and staff on how best to invest PEF. This will allow the school community to share their thoughts and ideas on how funding could be spent.

- Staff plan a range of appropriate interventions and support for children who require additional support with their learning. Senior leaders should now use consistent and clearly defined measures to evidence the impact of interventions on children's progress. This should support all staff to make informed evaluations about how well targeted approaches accelerate the progress of children.
- The headteacher and staff collaborate well with staff, partners, and the Parent Council and Parent Fundraising Group to support children and families. This includes fundraising events and initiatives to reduce the cost of the school day. For example, the Parent Council involved local businesses, who paid for buses for school trips. Senior leaders ensure that all local school trips are kept at a low cost for families. This all contributes to the school ethos of inclusion and belonging.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children across the school learn French. All teachers use the school's progressive planners to plan learning experiences. Children in P5 to P7 learn Scots, British Sign Language and Spanish in blocks as part of the 1+2 modern language approach.
- Children have regular access to the library bus 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.
- 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. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the school.

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.