

Summarised inspection findings

Falkland Primary School

Fife Council

30 June 2026

Key contextual information

Falkland Primary School is a non-denominational primary school located in the North East of Fife. It serves the communities of Falkland village and the surrounding area. At the time of inspection there were 117 children across five classes. The headteacher has been in post since August 2025 and is supported by a principal teacher. The headteacher has a shared headship with another school in the local authority. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile 7. The number of children registered for free school meals in P6 and P7 is below the national average. The headteacher reports that 34% of children require additional support with aspects of their learning. Approximately 34% of children attend the school from outwith the school’s catchment area.

Falkland Primary School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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	

- Senior leaders work very effectively with staff to create a nurturing, welcoming and purposeful learning environment. Staff and children demonstrate the recently redeveloped school values very well in their daily interactions. Almost all staff know children very well as individuals and as learners. They assess and adapt the learning environment effectively to support all learners. As a result, almost all children behave very well. Relationships across the school are very positive and most children feel happy and safe. Where children need support in managing their emotions, staff manage this sensitively and skilfully through their detailed knowledge of each child. This positive climate supports children to engage in their learning with increasing confidence.
- Children demonstrate an increasing awareness of their rights. Staff support this developing understanding through class discussions, planned learning activities and displays across the school. Senior leaders engage children in reflecting on rights through assemblies and whole school activities. This is resulting in children at all stages respecting one another and engaging meaningfully in reflection on their rights.
- Staff in all lessons deliver planned learning through an agreed four-stage lesson model. This consistent approach supports well children’s understanding of routines and activities. Senior

leaders have identified the need to continue to develop more consistent approaches to high quality learning and teaching across the school. As planned, they should involve children, parents and staff, building on the successful, recent approach to improving the teaching of writing.

- In almost all lessons, teachers share effectively the purpose of learning and make clear connections to prior learning. In most lessons, children are meaningfully involved in constructing steps to success. This results in children taking more responsibility for their learning and understanding how to be successful in the lesson. Most children understand well and discuss confidently the skills developed through learning activities. All teachers use questioning effectively to check for understanding. They should now develop approaches to deepen learning through questioning that challenges children more and develops higher order thinking.
- Most staff share effectively verbal, in the moment feedback and written feedback appropriate to the age and stage of learners. As a result, most children identify their strengths and how to improve their learning, particularly within literacy. Senior leaders and staff should now ensure children have a stronger role in reviewing and leading their learning across the curriculum.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers match learning well to children's needs and progress. They support children through well-considered groupings, direct teacher input and scaffolded resources. As a result, most children are engaged meaningfully in their learning and participate well in activities. In a minority of lessons, teachers' use of whole class learning activities results in a minority of children finding activities too easy or completing activities without meaningful extension to their learning. Senior leaders and staff should now develop further approaches to adapting planned learning activities to fully meet the needs of all children, including to stretch and challenge.
- Children benefit from well-developed approaches to outdoor learning activities. Staff plan effectively, including through the well-established 'Falkland Footsteps' programme. This is helping to ensure that all children experience meaningful learning through engagement with the natural world, local environment and community. As planned, staff should continue to develop progressive planning in outdoor learning that supports further children to understand how they are developing skills for learning, life and work.
- Most teachers make effective use of a variety of digital technologies to enhance and support learning. Across the school, children access digital devices for research tasks, core learning activities and to extend learning through appropriate games and applications. Children in early years engage very well in coding and programming activities that supports well their understanding of direction and extends their learning. Children are making increasingly confident and effective use of technology to overcome barriers to learning and produce their best examples of work.
- Children in early years experience a well-organised, well-resourced learning environment which supports them to be creative, curious and solve problems. Staff ensure the views of children inform the range of activities provided. Children engage in purposeful play for sustained periods of time and are beginning to describe the skills they are developing as a result. Activities include some that reflect the wider learning taking place in class, such as a

focus on people who help us. Teachers should continue to engage with national guidance to ensure children experience developmentally appropriate learning activities which enhance their engagement and progress in learning across early years.

- Teachers use a whole school assessment calendar at planned times throughout the year. They use effectively a range of summative and formative assessments, including standardised assessments to gather reliable evidence of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use this evidence to support their increasingly robust professional judgements about children's attainment and progress. Staff should now develop further their approaches to assessment across the curriculum to provide children with increased opportunities to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Staff's confidence in the assessment of writing has improved through recent professional learning and their engagement in moderation activities within the school and beyond. These experiences have helped to increase teachers' confidence in their professional judgements and strengthened a shared understanding of national standards. As planned, senior leaders should now support teachers to engage further in moderation of planning, learning, teaching and assessment across the curriculum.
- All teachers plan effectively for children's learning across a range of timescales, including long, medium and short term. They use local authority progression frameworks across all curricular areas to inform their planning. As a result, teachers are developing a shared, consistent understanding of progression.
- Teachers use a local authority tracking tool to monitor the progress of all children in literacy, numeracy and all other curricular areas. Senior leaders meet with teachers three times across the year to review the learning of all individual children and plan for their progress. This is helping staff to better understand children's attainment and progress over time. This is supporting them to plan increasingly effective interventions for children who require additional support in their learning. Senior Leaders and staff should continue to monitor these interventions to ensure that they are effectively meeting the needs of children. Children who require additional support with their learning are involved well in planning and reviewing the strategies and resources that help them best. Staff should increase the use of strategies to involve all children more in considering what they know already, the targets for their learning and in tracking their own learning.

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. 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. Attainment is strongest in listening and talking, with almost all children on track to attain expected levels. Most children at early and second level, and the majority of children at first level are on track to achieve national standards in literacy and numeracy. A few children at each stage are exceeding national expectations.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress relative to individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English. A few children make very good progress.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children listen and talk well during class activities and collaborative tasks. At early level, almost all children attempt to take turns when listening and talking in a variety of contexts. They need to develop this further when engaged in play. At first level, most children apply a few techniques, such as eye contact and body language when listening to others. A few should develop further their ability to communicate clearly and audibly. Almost all children at second level contribute relevant ideas, information and opinions when engaging with others. They build respectfully on the contribution of others during conversations.

Reading

- At early level, most children hear and say patterns in words and the single sounds. They use their knowledge of sight vocabulary to read familiar words in context. They should continue to develop their ability to blend sounds made by a combination of letters. At first level, most children select different texts for enjoyment and explain their preference. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. They should continue to develop their fluency and expression when reading out loud. Most children at second level, accurately identify the vocabulary and techniques used by an author to describe characters and settings. They explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. They would benefit from more practise answering inferential and evaluative questions about texts.

Writing

- At early level, most children form lower case letters correctly with increasing pencil control. They write simple instructions for others to follow using a clear sequence structure. They should continue to write for enjoyment, including through play. At first level, the majority of children create a variety of texts for different purposes. They share opinions, giving reasons. They should develop further their ability to use their knowledge of phonics and spelling strategies when spelling familiar and unfamiliar words. The majority of children at second level create texts using appropriate genre, form, structure and style. They understand the importance of tone and choice of words when trying to persuade their reader. They should continue to develop their note-taking skills to develop their thinking when creating new texts. Across the school, the quality of children's handwriting and presentation is beginning to improve following the introduction of clear presentation guidance.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy. A few children make very good progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children identify the number of objects in a group, count on and back to 10 and name the days of the week in sequence. At first level, the majority of children add and subtract multiples of 10 and 100 to or from whole numbers to 1000. They identify all coins and notes to £20 correctly. They would benefit from more practise applying knowledge of money in real-life contexts. At second level, most children round decimal fractions to the nearest whole number. They are at the early stages of developing their ability to solve simple algebraic equations. Across the school, children would benefit from regular opportunities to revisit and apply prior learning in these aspects of numeracy.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children understand and use correctly the language of position and movement. They use programmable devices confidently to follow directions such as forward, backwards, left and right. At first level, most children name and identify a range of two-dimensional shapes. They use the correct mathematical language, such as side, face and edge, to explain the properties of three-dimensional objects. At second level, most children use mathematical language including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe and classify a range of angles.

Information handling

- At early level, most children answer questions by extracting information from a simple diagram or graph. At first level, the majority of children use the most appropriate way to gather and sort data for a given purpose, for example, through the use of tally marks and tables. Children would benefit from further opportunities to describe the likelihood of events occurring in everyday situations. At second level, most children collect, organise and display data accurately in a variety of ways. Across the school, children should increase their experience of gathering and displaying data using digital formats.

Attainment over time

- Over the past three years, overall literacy and numeracy attainment has been generally in line with or above local authority and national averages.
- Staff's understanding of children's attainment and progress has increased this session. They use the local authority attainment tracking system increasingly effectively to track children's progress over time. Staff now analyse attainment data more closely to identify patterns and predict outcomes. This includes tracking the progress of specific groups of children, such as those who are care experienced or have additional support needs. Senior leaders understand the contributing factors to any variations in attainment over time, such as changes to cohort numbers. As planned, staff should continue to consolidate their developing approach to tracking to strengthen further their strategy for continuing to raise attainment.
- Overall, school attendance is consistently above the national average and has risen slightly year-on-year over the past three years. The number of children with attendance below 95% is reducing and incidences of exclusion are very low. Senior leaders track attendance closely and implement the local authority's attendance guidance appropriately. They actively promote the importance of good attendance through weekly updates to staff, school assemblies, and discussion with children and parents. Staff work closely with individual children and families to support attendance where appropriate.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff track children's achievements closely to ensure every child has opportunities to achieve in school. They encourage children and parents to share wider achievements. The majority of children feel that they have opportunities to discuss their achievements from outwith school with an adult who knows them well. Children particularly welcome celebrating their achievements at weekly assemblies. They are becoming increasingly aware of how these achievements support them to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. Staff use attractive wall displays to celebrate and share achievements. They track the recognition of achievement and participation in activities. As planned, senior and staff should use this information to help children to progressively develop their skills through these activities.
- Almost all children participate in an activity or sports group. Children develop sporting and teamworking skills through participation in a range of events, such as netball, athletics, tennis and golf tournaments. Their high level of success in competitive events builds a sense of achievement. Staff and children are proud recipients of a Gold Sports Award. Children gain confidence and performance skills through involvement in Burns poetry competitions and musical experiences with a professional orchestra.
- Opportunities for all children to contribute more effectively to school improvement have increased this session. The relaunch of the house system and the reform of pupil leadership groups have increased opportunities for children to lead and have a voice. Staff should continue to empower children to increase further this leadership responsibility.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children, families and the local community very well. They are respectful, responsive and sensitive to the needs of individual children and families. Working in

partnership with the supportive Parent Council, staff consider the cost of the school day. They secure grant funding, donations and use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to ensure all children have equitable access to learning, resources, clothing and wellbeing experiences.

- Senior leaders use PEF appropriately to support individuals and small groups of children to raise attainment. The provision of staffing and the use of strategies such as 'reading pals', peer mediation and transition support also contribute positively to progress. Staff's current focus on reducing the attainment gap in writing is supporting the majority of identified children at P3, P4 and P6 to make progress relative to their individual need.

Other relevant evidence

- Children across the school learn Spanish progressively as part of the Scottish Government's '1 + 2' modern language programme. Children from primary 5 learn French as a third language.
- All children benefit from high quality physical education lessons for a minimum of two hours per week.
- Teachers plan religious and moral education using a local authority progression planner. This is supporting children to learn about Christianity, world religions, diversity and to reflect on their beliefs and values. Children experience their entitlement to Religious Observance through a range of planned experiences throughout the year, including assemblies.

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.