

Summarised inspection findings

Bainsford Primary School

Falkirk Council

25 August 2026

Key contextual information

Bainsford Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the town of Bainsford in the Falkirk area. There are 168 children on the school roll organised across seven classes. This includes two composite classes in the upper school.

The headteacher has been in post for 18 years and is supported by a depute headteacher and an acting principal teacher. The school has a nursery provision for 40 children and an Enhanced Provision, which 10 children currently attend.

Children predominantly reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2.

Attendance is currently in line with the national average. There are 24 children who have English as an additional language. 30% of children are recorded as having an Additional Support need (ASN).

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 across the school are friendly, polite and proud to be members of their school community. Almost all children articulate well the school values of ready, respectful and safe. They demonstrate these values well in their daily interactions with each other and with adults in the school. All staff demonstrate strong, nurturing and positive relationships and take a rights based approach with all children. These are underpinned by the school values. Almost all children across the school demonstrate positive behaviour. As a result, almost all children engage well in their learning. Almost all staff manage behaviour sensitively and address instances of low-level disruption effectively in line with the whole school restorative approach. This helps to minimise disruption to teaching and learning.
- Most children engage very well in their learning and want to do well. In almost all lessons, children work effectively independently, in pairs or in groups. Their positive attitude to learning is most evident when tasks and activities are well matched to needs and interests. Staff provide relevant, motivating contexts for learning which support children to participate in a range of very well-planned and well-structured activities. Children are regularly involved in planning what and how they learn. Children's creativity and independence will be further enhanced by implementing this approach more robustly and consistently.

- Most children describe the main features of their lessons and what learning looks and feels like for them. They understand the importance of the start of their lessons when teachers share with them the purpose of the lesson. Teachers help children to know what they need to do to be successful in their work, using steps to success. In a few lessons, these steps to success are co-created with children. This supports children well to set targets for themselves and achieve success in their learning. Greater consistency in approaches to teaching and learning will further enhance the learning experiences of children. Senior leaders should now work closely with staff, children and partners to develop a clear strategy for teaching and learning which clarifies the main features of a lesson across all areas of the school. This should support all children better to understand the expectations and standards in every lesson.
- Most teachers use questioning effectively to consolidate children's learning and build their skills of curiosity as learners. Staff should now work to develop questioning further to consistently encourage and develop higher order thinking skills in children across the school.
- All staff across the school have aspiration and ambition for the children in their care. Teachers are very aware of children in their classes who face barriers and challenges to their learning. This is evident in their interactions with children and the caring, sensitive ways in which they support them in all aspects of their learning. Staff place great importance on ensuring that every child achieves and attains well. Staff have introduced several important interventions to prepare and settle children well for the day ahead. Staff are strongly focussed on ensuring that children demonstrate their readiness to learn. Examples of this work include a breakfast provision for all children, one-to-one support, and the effective use of pupil support assistants. These approaches are all making a significant difference to children who face challenges to access their learning effectively.
- All staff participate in professional learning to improve outcomes for children at all stages. This includes, for example, a literacy initiative which is well embedded and is highly motivating and engaging for most children. Children develop skills and techniques which they use across the curriculum, including in their topic work. Staff collaborate with each other successfully to develop ideas and share pedagogical approaches. Staff should now be supported to develop their practice in a more systematic way to further enhance and support teaching and learning.
- Teachers support children across the school to use digital technology well to support and enhance their learning. Children in the upper stages have access to a personal tablet device. In the lower primary, children access technology well to support their learning. This includes taking photographs, researching and using an online platform to support learning in mathematics. Children share their learning and homework using an online platform. Teachers provide helpful feedback to children using this technology. In addition, regular high quality verbal feedback in class and feedback in jotters is valued by children to improve and progress their learning. Most children agree that the feedback they receive helps to improve their learning.
- Staff engage successfully in moderation activities both within the school and with colleagues from other schools. The senior leadership team support a moderation model which ensures that all staff are fully aware of standards and expectations at each Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. This is supporting staff to make accurate professional judgements about children's progress.

- Senior leaders, in collaboration with staff, have developed an assessment calendar. This calendar supports all teaching staff to have a clear, consistent approach to assessment and gathering evidence of children's learning. Teachers use formative and summative assessments effectively to identify the progress children are making. They identify early those who are on track and those who require support to address gaps in their learning. Teachers use assessments to identify children who require more challenge in their learning. They then plan effectively to provide an appropriate level of challenge for those who require it.
- Teachers plan learning over extended periods which is enabling them to maximise the teaching time available for learning. Children who require support with their learning benefit from detailed medium-term plans with appropriate interventions which best meet their needs effectively. Teachers track the progress of children very well in literacy and numeracy. They have regular tracking meetings with senior leaders to discuss the progress of all children, identify gaps in learning and plan interventions appropriately. Collaboration between the staff team is strong and they work together very well to ensure that the needs of children are met well.

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. Most children at P1, P4 and P7 achieve expected national CfE levels.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress towards their own individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school children's progress in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children share stories they like to listen to and why they like them. They are confident in telling adults about what they are learning and answering questions about their learning. A few children at early level need to continue to develop their knowledge of rhyme and rhyming words. At first level children are learning to talk about authors and what they enjoy about books and stories. They should continue to develop their confidence in sharing their views in a group. At second level, most children share their ideas confidently in group discussions. They understand well the importance of eye contact, tone of voice and body language in engaging others during a presentation. A few children need more support to develop their confidence in sharing their ideas and presenting to others. Further development of talking and listening across all stages will support children to improve these important skills.

Reading

- At early level, most children know their sounds well and are attempting to read words and sentences with increasing confidence. A majority of children should talk about the characters, plot and sequence of the story to retell known stories with more confidence. At first level, children share their ideas about books they like and identify features of a reading book, including exciting characters and storylines. They read with fluency but should now further develop their use of expression to engage an audience. At second level, most children summarise well texts read, identifying the main ideas with evidence. They share why they like a text or author and answer questions on texts read. They are less confident discussing different writer's styles.

Writing

- At early level, all children enjoy creating stories and sharing these with each other and adults. They are confident to write their own stories, words and sentences through planned teaching and play experiences. They should add simple connectives and adjectives to their writing. At first level, most children plan their writing using helpful toolkits and shared vocabulary. This is developing their confidence well in creating imaginative texts. They should continue to add more detail and description to their writing to further enhance the text they create. At second level, most children write regularly in a range of genre. They understand clearly the features of different styles of writing, for example, the use of personification and metaphors in descriptive or imaginative writing. They should be supported to develop their use of more ambitious vocabulary and ensure punctuation is accurate in their writing.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is good.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count confidently to 20 and beyond, identifying the number before or after a given number. A few children count well to 100. Most children at early level add and subtract accurately and double numbers within 10. They should be supported to develop their knowledge of months and sequence of events within time. At first level, most children use a range of strategies well to add, subtract and multiply numbers. They require further practise to divide numbers accurately. At second level, most children add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers and decimals confidently. They understand equivalent fractions and calculate these well. They convert fractions to decimals and percentages correctly, with increasing confidence. They should continue to use their knowledge of number to solve more complex equations and word problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children name and sort two-dimensional (2D) shapes using simple criteria. At first level, most children plot symbols on a grid accurately and use simple co-ordinates. They are less confident describing the properties of three-dimensional (3D) objects. At second level, most children describe a range of angles confidently. They identify the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects well. They require to consolidate their knowledge of the nets of shapes and radius and diameter of a circle.

Information handling

- At early level, all children sort items by shape, size and colour independently. They need support to develop their knowledge of simple graphs and charts. At first level most children create a simple bar graph and know how to use tally marks to represent numbers. At second level, most children are confident collecting data using bar graphs or pie charts. They draw accurate conclusions from data. Children at first and second level should continue to use digital tools to extend the ways they can organise data.

Attainment over time

- Most children make good progress in their learning over time as they move through the school. Senior leaders and staff have robust systems in place to monitor children's progress together termly. Staff look at the progress of individual children and use this information to inform teacher's planning, literacy and numeracy interventions and health and wellbeing support. They evidence well the impact of this support, such as, the progress children make

with reading skills. Senior leaders monitor cohorts of children to look for trends and patterns, including for those who are care experienced or entitled to free school meals. These rigorous systems and regular monitoring ensures that almost all children get the support they need to achieve success and make progress in learning.

- Current attendance over the year is 92.6%, which is in line with national levels. A significant minority of children have an absence rate of more than 10%. Senior leaders have prioritised improving attendance and late coming through a school improvement focus over recent years. They support all parents to know the importance of good attendance through newsletters. They use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) appropriately to employ home school partners who work very closely with families and children to support improving attendance. Children are supported to attend school through a range of effective interventions including, for example, time in the Hygee room supported by an adult, regular check-ins and daily breakfast. As a result of this work, senior leaders know why children are absent and support families positively to continue to improve attendance. They should continue to prioritise these approaches. There are currently three children on part time timetables. Senior leaders should ensure that plans for these children are reviewed regularly to support them appropriately to return to their full entitlement to education. There has been one exclusion in the past year.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated well in newsletters, displays and through the schools' communication channels. Children value the opportunity to share their successes with each other. Staff should now consider how they can extend the ways they celebrate children's achievements within and outside of school. This should help children to speak more confidently about how they contribute to the life of the school and wider community.
- Across the school children have opportunities to attend lunchtime clubs including archery, golf and cheerleading. They take part in after school clubs and local events. As a result, children develop important skills including teamwork, communication and problem solving. Children enjoy the range of clubs on offer and would like further opportunities to attend clubs in the local area. Staff track children's wider achievements and attendance at clubs to help them provide experiences for any children at risk of missing out. This is helping children well to develop their confidence at trying new sports and developing their fitness.
- Senior leaders provide children with a range of trips and activities to extend learning experiences and develop skills beyond the classroom. This includes a P4-7 pantomime trip, work to support agreed charities, world book day events, a nativity and a P7 Burns supper. Children develop well skills in teamwork and problem solving as they plan events. Staff should continue to support all children to understand and articulate better the skills they are developing through the range of experiences on offer.
- Across the school, a few children have additional roles and responsibilities including as house captains, supporting children's rights, Bainsford bairns, buddies and dyslexia ambassadors. These roles help children to develop leadership skills and become responsible citizens. The dyslexia ambassadors help other children to understand what dyslexia is and supports inclusion effectively across the school.

Equity for all learners

- All staff know children and their families very well. They work together to ensure all children have equitable experiences and barriers to learning are reduced. This starts with a daily positive welcome and staff's use of well-embedded nurturing approaches. This helps children to feel valued. Senior leaders focus on ensuring they minimise costs during school. This includes subsidised trips, access to the Bainsford Larder for food, school uniform and clothing. Staff also support families well through effective signposting to local support or grants. They sensitively support families to ensure no child misses out on experiences. This is an important strength of the school.
- Senior leaders use PEF to provide a home school partner and school counsellor. This is supporting identified children to attend school, engage successfully in learning, speak to a trusted adult and know they are cared for. Staff evidence well the highly positive impact of these supports through a range of measures. Senior leaders use PEF to fund literacy and numeracy support. This is helping identified children to better access learning. As a result, teachers are beginning to help children close gaps in learning. Senior leaders should continue to monitor closely the success of interventions on closing gaps in children's learning to ensure they continue to be effective.

Context

The Enhanced Provision is located within Bainsford Primary School. It is a local authority special unit that supports children with a range and complexity of additional support needs from across Falkirk Council. Falkirk Council's Education Resource Group selects children for placement at the Enhanced Provision.

The current roll in the Enhanced Provision is 10 children ranging from P1 to P7. A majority of children who attend the Enhanced Provision are supported within the base class with some integration into mainstream. A minority of children who attend the Enhanced Provision experience most of their learning in mainstream classes, with support. The Enhanced Provision has one base classroom. Children access secure outdoor areas to support play and movement breaks.

The headteacher, supported by the acting principal teacher, has overall strategic responsibility for the Enhanced Provision. The Enhanced Provision has 1.3 full time equivalent teachers and one pupil support assistant.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Across the Enhanced Provision, relationships are positive, respectful and nurturing. Children benefit from calm and supportive learning environments, which promote effective self-regulation. Staff make effective use of praise and encouragement, tailored to individual needs. Their sensitive and responsive approaches enable children to participate well in their learning.
- Staff use of a range of resources and spaces well within the Enhanced Provision and outdoor areas to motivate children and support their emotional regulation. There is emerging evidence of increased structure and routine across the school day, contributing to greater consistency in children's experiences. Strategies such as song signifiers, visual supports, concrete materials and digital devices support routines. These approaches are beginning to help children manage and respond more positively to transitions. Staff should now continue to embed and apply these approaches consistently to further strengthen predictability and regulation of children's engagement.
- Staff provide clear explanations and instructions to support understanding. However, across the enhanced provision, the predominant use of whole-class teaching approaches limits the pace of learning for most children. As a result, learning is not always sufficiently matched to individual needs. Moving forward, staff should further develop their approaches to ensure learning and teaching is more personalised and progressive, enabling children to make improved and sustained progress.
- The revised approach to assessment and planning within the Enhanced Provision is at an early stage of development. Staff are beginning to use a range of assessment tools to inform their professional judgements of children's progress. These new approaches are providing staff with more robust information about children's learning. Senior leaders should now support staff to streamline assessment, planning and tracking processes across the provision. In doing so, they should ensure there are clearer links between assessment information and learning plans to

ensure that teaching is well targeted. Strengthening these links will support more purposeful planning and has the potential to accelerate children's progress.

- A minority of children within the Enhanced Provision access learning alongside their mainstream peers in most of their classes. The children are well integrated into lessons and benefit from effective support. As a result, they engage positively with learning and demonstrate increasing independence within the classroom environment.

Raising attainment and achievement

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy. A few children are making good progress. At pre-early milestones level, children join in with class songs and rhymes, for example, when song signifiers are used at the start and end of the day to support them to prepare for transitions within the day. They make choices using symbols to express their opinions and are beginning to copy letter forms. Children at early level enjoy watching, reading and listening to stories and, with support, take turns in conversations and when playing games. They use capital letters and full stops in their writing. At first level, children find key information in fiction and non-fiction texts. They can make notes and use these to write for different purposes. A few children at first level should develop further their use of conjunctions to help them build more complex sentences.
- In numeracy, most children are making satisfactory progress. A few children are making good progress. Children at pre-early level milestones are beginning to explore objects and shapes and can name their properties. They collect and group objects which share similar properties. At early level, children solve simple number problems and use correctly mathematical symbols. Children at early level now need to develop further their understanding of money and recognition of coins up to £2. They would benefit from gaining understanding of money and its use by exchanging coins for other objects. At first level, children add and subtract using three-digit numbers. They apply strategies for division, for example, by sharing equally, and use this approach to calculate simple percentages.

Attainment over time

- Most children make satisfactory progress against their personal targets. Teachers are monitoring progress using the pre-early level milestones and CfE levels across the curriculum. Staff have recently introduced targets which focus more closely on children's social communication, interactions and emotional regulation. The introduction of these targets is a positive development. While still at an early stage, it is beginning to provide a framework to measure children's progress in these important developmental areas. Senior leaders need to work closely with staff to build a clearer understanding of how these different systems connect. This should ensure that staff are clearer on the progress that are expecting individual children to make and accelerate progress against curricular and individual targets.
- Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to develop their understanding of national standards. Across the Enhanced Provision, teachers are assessing progress using the pre-early level milestones and CfE levels. In the most effective examples, teachers are assessing progress using a wide range of reliable assessment evidence. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to make sure that there is a more consistent approach to gathering, assessing and moderating evidence.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children benefit from educational visits in the wider community. For example, children have recently taken part in outdoor learning experiences supported by the local authority Outdoor Education Team. During these visits, children have learned about woodland and shoreline environments. As a result of these positive experiences, children develop well their communication and self-regulation skills in less familiar and more unpredictable environments. Children also take part in music sessions supported by youth music initiative. During these music sessions, children develop their knowledge of music, turn-taking and rhythm. Staff should continue to develop further opportunities for children to learn in the wider community.
- Children's successes are regularly celebrated by consistent use of praise and in classroom displays which showcase their classwork. Children and staff celebrate well their progress and achievements through class celebrations and by taking part in school assemblies and sports days. A few children benefit from leadership opportunities within the wider school, for example, as house captain. As a result of this recognition, children are proud of the progress they are making and gaining in confidence.

Equity

- The home school worker supports a few children and families from the Enhanced Provision. This is supporting improvements in children's attendance, emotional regulation and resilience.

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.