

Summarised inspection findings

St Bernard's Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

SEED No: 8503427

12 December 2017

Key contextual information

This is a denominational school situated in the Shawhead area of Coatbridge. There are 172 pupils on the school roll. There have been a number of staff changes in the school in the last year. Two new acting principal teachers have been appointed as well as three new class teachers and three new support staff members.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- Strategic planning for continuous improvement
- Implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the school's vision, values and aims. As recognised by the headteacher, it is now time to revisit the school's vision, values and aims to ensure that they fully reflect the school's current context and priorities.
- Two new acting principal teachers have been appointed and this has provided greater strength to the leadership team. Together, they share a clear vision for driving forward school improvement and are already bringing about enhancements in key areas such as numeracy and literacy. They demonstrate their personal commitment to the school values through their daily actions, creating an ethos of mutual respect and trust. They encourage all to do the same. They demonstrate strong team work which will be necessary to ensure the school continues to improve at a brisk pace. Clearer strategic guidance from this newly formed leadership team is required now to enable a more focussed and sustained approach to change.
- Since her appointment three years ago, the headteacher has provided effective leadership in securing a number of significant improvements. Staff willingly adopt key leadership roles in developing the curriculum. There are indications that these developments are improving outcomes for learners in areas, such as numeracy, sustainability and information and communications technology. Staff now need to increase their focus on monitoring the impact of new developments and interventions to ensure they have the maximum impact and secure the best possible outcomes for children.
- The headteacher and staff recognise that there is much still to be done to improve this school. Using national frameworks to support robust self-evaluation is required to ensure the correct priorities are identified and progressed. In addition, the school needs to develop more effective approaches to evaluating the impact of its work.
- For the 2017/18 academic session time has been protected for staff to engage in professional dialogue. This will allow increased opportunities for staff to engage in collegiate learning and effective self-evaluation. The headteacher is committed to

professional learning and there is evidence of teachers engaging in a range of professional learning. The school is outward looking and regularly visits other schools within and outwith the authority to identify and share good practice. As collegiate sessions become more established, the school would benefit from exploring how professional learning is shared more consistently and how it impacts on teaching and learning and improving outcomes for children.

- The headteacher monitors learning and teaching across the school and provides helpful feedback to teachers. We have shared with the headteacher ways of strengthening professional dialogue with teachers to ensure there is a stronger focus on data analysis and tracking children's progress.
- All staff are aware of the social and economic and cultural context of the school. The school tracks the progress of learning of children living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) areas one, two and three is in place. These approaches now need to be extended to include and track progress of different groups of learners/individuals.
- Across the school, children have opportunities to influence school improvement. However there is great scope to develop this further. We have discussed with the school ways in which this can be developed, maximising opportunities for children to acquire key skills for life, learning and work.
- This school is an attainment challenge school and as result has secured and benefitted from additional resources. An additional teacher to support the reading skills of individuals and groups is supporting children to make better progress in their reading.
- The school is using additional income gained from Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to secure additional staffing. This includes securing a principal and probationer teacher. Resources to enhance learning programmes for numeracy and aspects of the health and wellbeing programme have also been purchased. Staff can articulate well their rationale for the use of PEF.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Overall, there are very positive relationships between staff and children across the school. Children demonstrate a good understanding of fairness and being kind to each other. All children are very well-behaved and show respect for each other and adults.
- Overall, children are engaged in their learning and most children enjoy learning. When given the opportunity, children work well in pairs and small groups. At this time in the session teachers are establishing routines and expectations. As a result, there were fewer opportunities for children to be fully involved in planning and being independent in their learning. In the best examples, children learned contexts which promoted their own thinking in numeracy and provided them with opportunities to share this with their peers. This good practice should be extended to other areas across the curriculum.
- In most lessons children are aware of the purpose of lessons and what they need to do to be successful. Children have opportunities to communicate their understanding during lessons and as part of plenaries at the end of lessons.
- A significant number of children are unsure if their views are sought and acted upon. The school recognises that it has to increase the opportunities children have to inform learning and school improvement. The school has been very receptive to suggestions and guidance provided by the inspection team to improve this area of its work and has already begun to plan new approaches to capturing children's voice more effectively.
- The quality of teaching varies considerably across the school. In the last few weeks, a number of new teachers have recently taken up post in the school. They are taking time to establish positive relationships with their new classes and to gain a good understanding of the needs of different learners. In addition a large group of new pupils joined the school at the start of the session. Experienced staff share good practice with colleagues regularly. New approaches to the teaching of numeracy are working well and providing good opportunities for children to have greater responsibility for their learning. In lessons such as French when children are more actively engaged in their learning, enjoyment and challenge are clearly evident. This is not yet a consistent feature of learning across this school. Most lessons are well organised with most teachers providing clear explanations and instructions. The majority of staff make some use of digital technologies as part of their lessons to stimulate or enhance learning. In a few classes, staff make good use of questioning to promote children's high order thinking skills. This needs to be a regular feature in all classes.

- In the majority of classes, lessons are differentiated to meet the varying needs of learners. Support staff are deployed well to support individuals and groups of learners as appropriate. More work needs to be done to ensure the higher-achieving children are appropriately challenged across the school. For this group of learners the pace of learning is too slow.
- Across the school, there is an over-reliance on summative assessment to inform staff on the attainment of children and identify gaps in learning. These assessments are not supporting staff effectively in making professional judgement as to whether children are making appropriate progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels. There is a need for assessment to be integral to the planning of learning and teaching. The current approach to record keeping is overly bureaucratic and time consuming and the school would benefit from it being simplified and streamlined.
- Teachers are at an early stage in developing confidence in how they assess when children have achieved a level. As planned, staff should continue to work with colleagues both within and outwith the school to develop a shared understanding of standards required to achieve a level across all stages. This session staff plan to work with colleagues to plan holistic numeracy assessments. National benchmarks should be used to support this but care should be taken that these are used for assessment purposes and not for planning learning.
- The headteacher monitors teachers' forward planning through termly reviews. In addition to ensuring that appropriate planning of learning and teaching is evident, these reviews need to have a stronger focus on tracking individual progress of children, making use of SIMD data and other key information to ensure all children make the best possible progress.
- As the school develops progressive pathways for all areas of the curriculum this will allow staff to build upon children's previous skills and knowledge more effectively. The school has made a positive start to tracking and monitoring but it is not yet sufficiently robust.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

- There are clear learning pathways in a few curricular areas. However, this is an area staff have identified requiring some attention. Much work has been done to improve the pathway for mathematics and numeracy and plans are in place to support staff in class and to monitor more closely the effectiveness of the revised mathematics and numeracy programmes. These pathways need to be redesigned to support staff in raising attainment of all. Procedures should be modified to ensure a robust approach to passing on documentation of pupil progress and records of areas covered in mathematics and numeracy.
- At present it is not clear from year to year what concepts in mathematics and numeracy have previously been taught as the documentation of progress through the Curriculum for Excellence level doesn't move from year to year with the child. This results in teachers being unable to build effectively on prior learning.
- The school should as a matter of urgency implement fully the planned health and wellbeing progression pathway across the school.
- As staff refresh the curriculum they could explore how best to develop children's skills for the future as outlined in the Career Education Standard. In doing this they should develop more fully the use of partners in the community to enhance the curriculum and support their efforts to implement the guidance in developing the young work force.
- Staff are aware of the challenges facing children in their lives and in their learning and should adapt programmes accordingly to support them. They are aware of the socio-economic context of the community and have a number of interventions in place to support children. For example, a number of children benefit from reading recovery support to address identified difficulties in acquiring early reading skills. Overall, staff are clear about what the gaps are in children's learning and should now focus on how the curriculum is designed or adapted to address these.
- Children develop well their understanding of the Catholic faith through a planned and progressive programme of religious and moral education. Also a range of social justice and equality issues are developed through this programme across the school. The school would benefit from developing a more coherent and progressive approach to developing children's understanding of equality, diversity and challenging stereotypes through the curriculum.
- Across the school children have experience of both French and Spanish.
- At present the school has a clear over view for interdisciplinary learning which outlines which subjects should be covered to provide a balance of experiences across the year.
- We have asked the school that it ensures that all subjects are implemented across the school at an appropriate pace to ensure appropriate breadth, challenge and application.
- The school should review timetable to maximise teaching time and ensure all subjects are taught. For example, at the moment children are not experiencing enough of the sciences.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- Overall, the school has developed a few ways of engaging and communicating with parents about the school and their child's learning. These include parental workshops on literacy and numeracy. Parents indicated that they found these events to be very worthwhile. Good partnership working with Community Learning and Development colleagues are used to deliver workshops on key areas such as reading.
- Parents have told us they would like communication between school and home to be improved. The school is exploring and developing different ways to take this forward. More regular newsletters are now shared with parents. The 'latest and best' jotters as well as weekly reports enable parents to a certain extent be aware of their children's progress. We have asked that more pupil voice as well as scope for parental input be a consistent feature of these approaches.
- The school benefits from the strong support it receives from the PTA and Parent Council. The school is keen to extend the membership of these groups to involve more parents in the work of the school.

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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

- Children benefit from positive relationships with staff and with each other. Staff provide a supportive environment for learning and as a result, almost all children are happy and feel safe. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, most (90%) children who responded stated that they felt safe in school. When talking to children they told us that they were happy and they could identify a member of staff that they would speak to if they had concerns. Children are demonstrating caring attitudes and responsible attitudes through their roles as buddies.
- Children are able to identify key factors related to their health and wellbeing such as the benefits of exercise and diet. As a result of learning opportunities delivered through assemblies and other contexts, children have an awareness of the wellbeing indicators. As yet, they are not able to demonstrate a sound understanding of what they mean for them as individuals. Children do not yet have an awareness of other important issues such as alcohol and substance misuse or sexual health and relationships. Staff are currently undertaking training in God's Loving Plan and now need to ensure children have a good understanding of issues that will impact on them as they grow and develop. The school recognises that it now needs to improve its approaches to meeting the wellbeing needs of children across all aspects of health and wellbeing. Staff should implement a progressive health and wellbeing curriculum that takes account of the needs of children and the context of the school. In addition, there should be robust approaches to tracking and monitoring progress in health and wellbeing to enable the school to demonstrate progress, identify if it is improving outcomes for children and help staff identify children who require targeted support. A few children are able to talk about children's rights. The school now needs to consider how it can help children better understand their rights.
- Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to engaging in professional learning opportunities to support their understanding of health and wellbeing issues. Staff have participated in training such as such as Growth Mindset, North Lanarkshire Council Can Cook and the Solihull Approach. There now needs to be a greater focus on implementing the skills that staff are developing and monitoring the impact of approaches and initiatives to ensure they lead to improved wellbeing outcomes for learners. To enable staff to provide targeted support in health and wellbeing, they should make better use of health and wellbeing information and data that is pertinent to the context of the school.
- Appropriate processes are in place to identify and support children who have additional support needs. Class teachers use assessment information to adapt learning and teaching approaches and provide support. The headteacher uses assessment data to

track those children who are not making expected progress. As a result, children benefit from targeted support. The school is able to demonstrate how this support is resulting in improved outcomes for some children. The school should now continue to further track the impact of all interventions to ensure they are leading to higher attainment. Staff should now track progress and attainment for other groups of learners.

- Children are currently learning about friendships and issues related to bullying. They have previously been involved in awareness raising about cyber-bullying and online safety. As a result, children can talk about how to keep safe online and the risks associated with social media. The school had previously identified bullying as an area of priority. At the time of inspection almost all children felt that the school dealt well with bullying. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all (96%) of children who responded were positive about how the school deals with bullying. A positive next step would be to develop an anti-bullying/promoting positive behaviour policy In collaboration with children.
- Children have opportunities to attend a range of after school activities. Staff are beginning to track attendance at these clubs and encourage all children to participate.
- Through religious and moral education, children have opportunities to learn about different cultures and religions. There are appropriate opportunities for religious observance. Over 20% of children who attend the school have English as an additional language. Children say that they are happy and feel included in the life of the school. Children who speak other languages are keen to support others who are at the early stages of understanding English language, for example, older children reading to younger children in Polish.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- At present staff record children's progress in literacy and numeracy through standardised tests and other summative assessments. In literacy, assessments are linked to the active literacy programme for reading and writing. As a result of numeracy assessments, staff are aware of the gaps in learning and have taken steps to address these areas. There needs to be a clearer focus on raising attainment and 'closing the gap' in future analysis of data. Staff have a clear understanding of the SIMD profile of learners in their classes.
- Overall, attainment at the early level in literacy and numeracy is good and satisfactory at the first and second level. Early gains made for most children are not sustained over time. Significant work has taken place to improve mathematics and numeracy but has yet to impact on overall attainment data. PM benchmarking in reading for specific children has been used since December 2015 and tracking of progress is now ongoing. Specific interventions such as 'reading recovery' have been introduced and are beginning to impact on the progress of some learners. It is important that interventions are kept under close review to ensure impact is closely monitored. Across the school children are capable of achieving more highly in numeracy and literacy.

Numeracy

- Most children who have achieved the early level are able to add and subtract comfortably within 20 and can count confidently beyond 20. Most are confident in their number beyond 20. A significant number of children are able to identify strategies to help them add or subtract such as the empty number line. In money, children are aware of coins up to £1 and can create amounts to 20p. Most children understand the language of measure and confidently discuss heavier, lighter, longer and shorter appropriately. Most children have a good understanding of shape and can recognise and describe common 2D shapes. They are confident in describing symmetry within shapes.
- They are aware of bar graphs as a way of displaying information gathered. Overall, children achieving the early level would benefit from further problem solving experiences and learning their mathematics and numeracy in real-life contexts.
- At the first level, the majority of children are beginning to identify strategies to help them calculate addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Overall, children need to develop further confidence in both written and oral calculations. Staff should encourage children to use these for mental calculations. The majority are confident in the tables up to five and apply this learning. However, a significant number of children are unsure of fractions of a whole number and are not confident in identifying right angles. The majority of children are able to identify coins and notes to £5 and can identify simple amounts of

change. Children are aware of bar graphs and can speak about collecting information of favourite colours and foods. Overall, there is scope to improve attainment further and improve children's ability to solve problems.

- The majority of children working towards being secure at the second level are confident in using large numbers and in place value. They are particularly confident in articulating a range of mental agility strategies to tackle complex problems. Staff now need to encourage children to rely on using these strategies mentally. The majority of children are confident with decimals and are able to find simple fractions of a whole number. Children are less confident in finding more complex fractions of a whole number. The majority of children can identify a range of triangles but they are not confident in discussing the varied properties of these shapes. As the school improves the approach to numeracy and mathematics further it is important to ensure children are able to set out and perform written calculations confidently. Overall, children working towards the second level in numeracy and mathematics need to understand measure, shape and probability and chance more fully.

Literacy

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy. At the early level children are making good progress.

Listening and talking

- Overall, children listen well in classes. They talk confidently to each other, staff and visitors. However, for lengthy periods of time children listen to their teachers. They have too few opportunities to work in groups and as a result, are less skilled in listening and responding to each other and building on one another's ideas. Developing improved approaches to teaching listening and talking skills in meaningful contexts will be required to address this.

Reading

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in reading. At the early stages children are making good progress in reading. They have a good knowledge of phonics and common words which enable them to read simple texts. By P3, children are able to identify the main ideas from a text and respond to a range of questions. Opportunities to create their own questions would support children to understand and analyse texts more effectively. As children move through the school their skills in word recognition, comprehension and decoding decreases. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to address this. By P5 most children can identify their favourite authors but are less skilled in identifying the specific features used by particular authors. Older children are able to describe different characters and explain the plot in their class novel. They are developing their understanding of inference. The school is encouraging children to read more for enjoyment. Increasing access to books at home would support this better, in addition involving and consulting with children in promoting reading for pleasure needs to be developed.

Writing

- Children at the early stage make good attempts to write sentences and write independently. Children in P2 write simple reports. They also have opportunities to write regularly and enjoy writing about their own experiences. At the middle stages, children can identify some different types of genre and their particular features. By P5 the majority of children make use of paragraphs to organise their writing. Although they can explain

the purpose and use of punctuation, this is not always evident in their written work. At the first level feedback is not always helpful in supporting children to improve their writing. Self- and peer-assessment is not always accurate or constructive. Children will need help in developing these skills. Higher expectations and consistency is required.

- At the second level, children write for different purposes across their learning. There are good examples of extended writing at P6 and P7. The majority of children apply spelling rules and strategies to spell words correctly. Most use a range of punctuation including speech marks. Learning intentions are shared to support children's writing however children are not always able to articulate what they need to do to be successful. Children need to be encouraged to review what they have written to ensure it is technically accurate and makes sense. Children share core targets, it would be helpful for children to also have their own individual targets. These could be shared with parents also. Staff are making use of national benchmarks to support assessment. Care needs to be taken that these are not used for planning as this will make learning too narrow.
- Staff have a range of strategies in place to support children's attainment such as mathematics and reading recovery, a number of alternative reading resources to meet needs and interests, dyslexia support and support for children using specific software and hardware packages. We observed the very effective use of laptops to support a group of learners. Staff now need to monitor the impact of these interventions to ensure that they are making a difference to children's attainment.
- Through the tracking system in place, staff clearly identify children in lower SIMD banding and record their progress in standardised tests and in numeracy assessments. This is used to plan interventions to raise attainment. The next step would be to summarise the messages this data is giving the school about the effectiveness of their interventions. This would support staff in identifying further the 'gap' for all children and enable them to articulate more clearly if they are closing the gap and providing equity for all learners.

School choice of QI : safeguarding and child protection

- **Arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection**
- **Arrangements to ensure wellbeing**
- **National guidance and legislation**

- The school has in place a recently updated child protection policy. Information within the policy is appropriate, relevant and provides detailed guidance for staff in dealing with child protection concerns. Staff have a sound understanding of child protection procedures and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They value opportunities to participate in annual child protection training. They would welcome more regular updates and opportunities for a more in-depth learning in this area. The school should use national guidance such as the National Framework for Child Protection Learning and Development in Scotland 2012 to help it provide training matched to the roles and remits of staff. The school has recently introduced new approaches to the recording of care and welfare concerns. These are helping staff maintain on-going records about children who may require support or interventions. There should be clear guidance as to the storage of these records and how the information should be passed to senior leaders.
- Approaches to child protection and safeguarding are part of the school's self-evaluation processes. The school improvement plan details priorities for improvement related to child protection. The school should now continue to evaluate approaches and identify improvements that lead to better outcomes for children such as developing pupil voice and ensuring the curriculum builds resilience and enables children to understand risks and keep safe.
- Staff have created a supportive ethos and almost all children tell us that they are safe and happy at school. They are able to identify a key adult in the school that they can talk to. The school now needs to further develop programmes and courses to ensure children have a good understanding of what it means to be healthy and safe. There needs to be further opportunities for pupils to be part of decisions and to voice concerns and complaints. In pre-inspection questionnaires, fewer than half (41%) of children who responded either disagree or don't know if the school takes their views into account and around a quarter (24%) don't know if the school listens to their views. The school should develop its curriculum further to promote resilience. Staff should use information about children and their understanding of individual needs to provide targeted support to those who may require it. Consideration should be given to providing a range of ways in which children can communicate their feelings and emotions such as non-verbal approaches.

Strengths

- Polite, well-behaved children who are very proud of their school.
- Commitment of the headteacher and staff to work towards securing improved outcomes for children.
- The teamwork of staff, together with their willingness to adopt leadership roles to help the school improve at a brisk pace and bring about necessary improvements.
- Positive steps taken towards improving children's attainment in numeracy.

Aspects for development

- Improve learning, teaching and assessment to ensure children's learning needs are well met and that children's learning experiences are of a consistently high quality across the school.
- Improve approaches to self-evaluation to bring about necessary and sustained improvement. Involve children more in effecting and leading positive change in the school.
- Continue to develop the curriculum as planned and in particular implement fully a progressive health and wellbeing programme and ensure it leads to improved outcomes for 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.

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