



# St Helen's Primary School

## School Improvement Update

Session 2024—2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

At St Helen's Primary School, we are committed to ongoing improvement to ensure the highest quality of education and support for our children and families.

A vital part of this process is self-evaluation, which is why we regularly invite you to share your views through QR codes or Microsoft Forms. Your feedback, alongside input from our staff and pupils, plays a crucial role in shaping our next steps.

This leaflet outlines the progress we've made over the course of this session, highlights key messages from the feedback we've received, and gives an overview of the developments we're planning for the year ahead.

I hope you find this update both informative and encouraging.

Kind regards,

Liz Kelly

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN PRIORITIES 2024—2025**

As many of you will know from attending the Meet the Teacher event in September 2024—we had a cluster priority and two school priorities on our improvement plan:

Cluster Priority—By the end of 2024/25, all staff will better understand how to support care-experienced children. Cluster schools will have earned the national "We Promise" Award, helping improve support through the GIRFEC approach.

Cluster Primaries supporting improvements in S1 attendance

By June 2025 the number of pupils achieving third level maths will increase to 79.3% in line with the local authority stretch aim.

School Priorities:

1. To continue work on offering and develop an aspirational curriculum rationale
2. To raise attainment by enriching learning, teaching and assessment ensuring learners are at the heart.

Please read on to hear about the progress we have made with each



### Cluster Priorities:

1. By the end of 2024/25, all staff will better understand how to support care-experienced children. Cluster schools will have earned the national "We Promise" Award, helping improve support through the GIRFEC approach.
2. Cluster Primaries supporting improvements in S1 attendance
3. By June 2025 the number of pupils achieving third level maths will increase to 79.3% in line with the local authority stretch aim.

### What did we do/impact for learners?

1. Staff have taken part in training at both school and cluster level, helping everyone develop a better understanding of how to support care-experienced children. All schools in our cluster have now achieved the 'Keeping the Promise' Award. This means a more consistent and caring approach across all our schools.
2. We've been placing a stronger focus on school attendance through ongoing communication with parents and pupil support meetings. This has helped us identify families who may be facing challenges with attendance and offer the right support. Our Family Engagement and Support Assistant (FESA) has worked closely with targeted families, leading to improved attendance in many cases. Where attendance hasn't improved, we've continued to work together through Planning for Children's Wellbeing meetings—at times enlisting the support of Social Work to find further ways to help.
3. Staff from the Cluster Primaries and secondary school formed a numeracy strategy group. We have begun sharing teaching strategies to improve how maths is taught and understood. Transition visits were prioritised to support learners as they move from P7 to S1. Teachers have agreed to do more classroom visits and joint planning in future to keep learning consistent and effective. The number of pupils achieving third level numeracy exceeded the target of 79.3% .

### What are we going to do next?

- **Improving How Teachers Learn and Work Together** We will create a planned approach where teachers explore new ways to help children understand numeracy (math skills). They will set clear questions to guide their learning, observe each other's teaching, and take time to talk about what works best.
- **Teachers Visiting Each Other's Classes** We'll organise visits between primary and secondary school teachers across the year. These visits will focus on seeing how numeracy is taught and how pupils are engaged. After each visit, teachers will discuss their observations to share ideas and improve teaching.
- **Making Transition from Primary to Secondary Smoother** - We will move key maths activities to earlier in the year so that teachers have more time to prepare and follow up. We'll also work together to create a shared plan that includes assessment results, teachers' professional views, and what students say about their learning.



- **Teachers Working Together to Agree on Standards** We will hold sessions where teachers from all schools in the cluster look at real student work together. This helps everyone have a clear and consistent understanding of what skills pupils should have as they move from primary to secondary school in numeracy.
- **Keeping an Eye on Students Just About to Meet Their Targets** We will keep track of pupils who were close to reaching their expected numeracy level in P7 and continue to monitor their progress in S1 and S2. Teachers from primary and secondary will regularly meet to discuss these pupils and make sure they get the right support if needed.



### What did we do/Impact for Learners?

To address this, staff took part in training and discussions focused on making sure every child gets a broad and balanced learning experience. We introduced new planning tools called progression pathways to help teachers plan better and cover all 8 areas of the curriculum, including outdoor and digital learning.

- **Technologies**, with more focus on digital skills and computing
- **Expressive Arts**, especially drama and dance activities
- **Science**, with more topical and engaging science themes

Because of this work, children now enjoy a richer, more engaging curriculum that supports their creativity, thinking skills, and practical learning. The stronger focus on outdoor activities and digital technology has also helped increase pupil engagement, which is reflected in our positive attendance rate of 94%.

- Finalise and share our curriculum rationale explaining how and why we teach what we do.
- Make sure all children experience a broad and balanced curriculum across all eight areas.
- Develop a planned program for outdoor learning so that children regularly use outdoor spaces for purposeful activities.
- Make sure digital tools are used more often in lessons so all children can build important digital skills.



## **PRIORITY 2—To raise attainment by enriching learning, teaching and assessment ensuring learners are at the heart.**

### **What did we do?/What was the impact of all these actions for learners?**

This year, we focused on giving children more say in their learning and opportunities to take the lead in how they learn. Staff have been working closely with North Lanarkshire Council through the Learning, Teaching, and Assessment (LTA) cycle to improve this.

Across all stages, children are regularly involved in planning their learning, especially in topics that connect different subjects (interdisciplinary learning). Teachers use activities like learner conversations, goal setting, and co-creating success criteria to help children take ownership of their learning. Almost all classes now give pupils a say in how they show what they have learned and the themes they explore.

This approach has helped children feel more engaged and responsible for their learning. Many pupils told us they feel included in decisions about their education and are becoming more confident talking about their progress. They understand better why they are learning certain things and what they need to do to succeed.

Regular checks in classrooms showed good progress:

- Children are taking more responsibility and managing their learning independently.
- Most classes clearly share learning intentions, and pupils can confidently explain what they are learning.
- Many pupils understand what they need to improve and are getting better at self-evaluating their work.

Teachers also feel positive about these changes, saying the training has helped them deliver clearer lessons with clear goals and success criteria.

### **Pupil Feedback on Key Areas of Learning**

We asked pupils about their experiences in outdoor learning, digital learning, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths), and expressive arts—areas we aimed to improve this year.

- **Outdoor Learning:** 80% of pupils sometimes learn outdoors and enjoy doing activities like spelling, maths, and measuring angles outside. They want more frequent outdoor lessons and better equipment. Outdoor learning is helping children understand and apply what they learn, especially in numeracy and science.
- **Digital Learning:** 68% use digital devices regularly for things like creating presentations, playing educational games, and typing. Using digital tools more often is helping pupils develop communication, research, and literacy skills.
- **STEM:** Nearly half (49%) really enjoy STEM activities such as making rockets, exploring oceans, and building projects. These hands-on learning experiences are helping improve problem-solving and critical thinking, which support success in numeracy and science.



**PRIORITY 2—To raise attainment by enriching learning, teaching and assessment ensuring learners are at the heart.**

**What did we do?/What was the impact of all these actions for learners? (Continued)**

- **Expressive Arts:** 57% take part in expressive arts activities sometimes, with many asking for more drama and dance opportunities. Expanding this area helps build creativity, confidence, and communication skills, which also benefit literacy and wellbeing.

Overall, giving pupils more voice and leadership in their learning is making a positive difference, helping them become more engaged, confident, and motivated learners.

**What are we going to do now?.**

- **Give Pupils More Voice** We will keep making sure children have a say in planning, assessing, and thinking about their learning so they feel more motivated and responsible.
- **Improve Teaching Consistency** Teachers will continue learning and working together to use clear learning goals, success criteria, helpful feedback, and good questioning to encourage deeper thinking and creativity.
- **Offer a Broader Curriculum** We will use planning tools and creative deployment of staff next session to make sure all subjects are covered well, with extra focus on STEM, digital skills, outdoor learning, and expressive arts.



## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES FOR 2025—2026

### What are we developing next session and why?

We consulted with the children about what they would like us to take forward this session for our improvement plan. They gave the following feedback:

- More outdoor learning/resources
- More toys in playground
- Trim trail upgrade
- Basketball, football, netball clubs and teams
- Set up a playroom
- More Pupil Council Meetings
- Area activities to bring areas together
- Art Club

### **PRIORITY 1:** Curriculum Rationale Year 3

We will finalise and put into practice our clear plan for the curriculum, making sure it supports children's growth in all areas, respects their learning rights, and follows important design principles. We'll also review the curriculum to ensure all subjects are covered well and fit together smoothly. Enriching outdoor learning will be part of this priority which aligns with the children's views.

**Why?** - We want to make sure your child's learning is balanced and meaningful, helping them develop the skills and confidence they need for the future. By carefully planning and checking the curriculum, we ensure all subjects are taught well and connect with each other, giving every child the best chance to succeed and enjoy learning.

**PRIORITY 2:** We will carefully review our teaching and learning, using evidence and feedback to make improvements. This will help ensure teaching is more consistent and has a positive impact on all children's progress.

**Why?** - By regularly checking how teaching is going and using what we learn, we can make sure your child gets the best possible support. This helps all children learn more effectively and reach their full potential.

**PRIORITY 3:** Learning Through Play – We are introducing age-appropriate play-based learning in Primary 1 and 2, with plans to extend this to Primary 3. This approach helps children stay engaged, be creative, and develop a deeper understanding of what they're learning. A focus on play responds to the children's views.

**Why?** - We aim to make the transition from nursery smooth and supportive, not just into Primary 1 but continuing into Primary 2. By building on what children have already experienced and learned, we help them feel confident, secure, and ready to keep learning and growing at their own pace.

## **PUPIL EQUITY FUND**

### **What is the Pupil Equity Fund?**

This is a sum of money given to schools to spend on supports for children to help close the poverty related attainment gap. The Pupil Equity Fund is known as PEF for short.

### **How much does a school get?**

This will vary from school to school as the PEF is calculated based on the number of pupils in the school that are entitled to means tested free school meals. St. Helen's PEF is just over £40,000 and this is downloaded in April each year according to the financial year.

### **What has the PEF been used for this session?**

As shared at the Meet the Teacher event in September 2024, the PEF was used to add extra teaching staff to our school team. This gave us more flexibility to run targeted support groups for literacy and numeracy, as well as additional help within classrooms.

We carefully used data and observations to identify the children who would benefit most from this support.

### **What was the impact of the support?**

At the start of the year, the PEF helped provide focused literacy and numeracy support across the school. This included programs like Phonics International, reading and writing groups, numeracy support groups, and class-based support for creative writing. Children responded well, and we saw clear improvements in their skills and progress.

Unfortunately, from October onwards, staff absences and the lack of supply cover meant we couldn't continue these groups as fully as planned, which limited the support available for the rest of the year.

### **What will PEF be used for in 2025—2026?**

This session—the school consulted with learners and The Parent Council. The PEF budget for this session, which equates to £40,425 will be used to finance an additional teacher on a full time basis. Identified learners across the school will benefit from additional support. Feedback from pupils who have received class based or group support indicated that children find this helpful and feel that it helps them to build confidence and move forward in their learning.

The additional staffing financed through PEF will also be used to release a Class Teacher to lead and develop approaches to learning through play—this will involve the creation of a playroom.

Please scan the QR code or click on the link below to tell us what you think of the priorities the school has identified to take forward next session; to use the PEF money to enhance the teaching compliment in the school and provide staff training to develop learning through play in Primaries 1 and 2.

***There are only 3 questions which will take less than 1 minute to complete.***

Parent Consultation School  
Improvement Priorities 2025 -  
2026 and PEF Expenditure

