

# Abington Primary School

## Standards and Qualities

### Report 2023-24

Abington Primary School is a small, rural primary school situated in the village of Abington within South Lanarkshire. Our school serves the villages of Abington, Crawfordjohn, and the surrounding areas. Our school's catchment area has a mix of local authority and private accommodation, as well as nearby farms. Approximately 44% of our children are bused to school. We have a close working relationship with the 11 other associated primary schools in the Biggar Learning Community. This year our school roll comprised of 42 pupils in two classes: Primary 1-3 and Primary 4-7, although this configuration may change in the future dependent on the number of pupils at each stage. Our school's new build was completed in May 2016 and boasts two classrooms, an open area, a canteen/gym hall, and a stage as well as a multi-use games area in the playground. Our school is also host to Rigside and Rural Community Nursery where many of our future children attend.

Abington Primary shares a head teacher with Crawford Primary School. We currently have 3 full-time teachers and 1 part-time teacher, who liaise closely to provide stimulating learning environments for our learners. We have one full-time team leader and 3 part-time school support assistants, who working together with the teaching staff provided targeted support for children to enhance and aid teaching and learning. Around 28% of our school's roll is made up of pupils placing requests. The SIMD bands within our catchment area are mixed with approximately; 41% of our pupils are from bands 1-3, 56% are from bands 4-5 and 3% are in band 7. Pupils with free meal entitlement make up around 13% of our school roll.

We were delighted to receive the Silver Reading Schools Award in 2022 and the Gold School Sports Award in 2023. Our Parent Council is a vital part of our school and supports us in many ways, including representing the views of parents & carers, fundraising, and supporting after-school activities.

Our school's vision and values play an integral role in Abington Primary School's ethos. It was developed and agreed upon through a thorough self-evaluation and consultation process with our school community and was refreshed in 2018. Our vision and values are discussed and celebrated regularly at school assemblies.

**Our Vision: Safe; Happy; Aiming for the Highest**

**Our Values: to Respect Ourselves, Respect Others and Respect the Environment.**

These values underpin all school learning and activities. Pupils and staff continue to build and sustain strong relationships built on mutual trust. Our highly positive ethos is a direct result of focussing on pupil voice and having robust procedures in school to support 'Getting it Right for Every Child' and developing pupil skills and abilities to ensure they can 'aim for the highest.'

## Priority 1 - Raise attainment in literacy through establishing explicitly teaching with a strategic focus on Writing

What did we set out to do?

- To raise attainment in literacy through establishing an enquiry-based pedagogy with a strategic focus on Writing
- By focusing on explanatory teaching approaches, there will be consistent writing approaches throughout the school.
- Through CLPL staff will develop strategies to support learners in developing and refining their writing skills.
- School support assistants and teaching staff will take part in NELI training to gain expertise to support targeted early level learners in developing their listening and talking skills.

Progress

- All teaching staff engaged Stephen Graham 'Explicitly Teaching Writing' online webinars to gain knowledge and expertise on six of the text types.
- The SMT engaged in strategic training on embedding pm writing strategies within learning and teaching throughout the school.
- Teaching staff took part in moderation activities across schools to ensure continuity in teaching and learning, and shared understanding of benchmarks and criteria for achieving a level.
- Teaching staff visited and shared good practice of explanatory learning across schools.
- Peer observations across schools took place to share good practice in learning and teaching of a class writing lesson.
- PM writing resources were created and used to support teaching and learning.
- Two school support assistants & two members of teaching staff completed NELI training.
- Targeted children took part in targeted NELI interventions to help improve their listening and talking.

## Impact

- All teaching staff involved, report having a greater understanding and increased confidence in identifying areas requiring input to raise attainment.
- Using an Explicitly Teaching Writing approach has provided structured and scaffolded writing instruction that has helped pupils develop their writing abilities, as indicated by pupils.
- Staff have developed confidence in matching professional judgements to text evidence, ensuring a greater focus on improved attainment using the benchmarks
- All teaching staff involved have indicated that explicitly teaching writing has supported struggling writers
- Moderation sessions have shown that PM is being used consistently across the school.
- All classes are using core and genre targets in writing lessons and feedback from p4-7 pupils have indicated that almost all are more confident in self-assessing their written work using writing criteria.
- NELI interventions have been used with targeted group of children to help improve their talking and listening with varied success.

## Next Steps

- To ensure staff are confident in teaching all text types they will continue to engage with 'Explicitly Teaching Writing' to gain knowledge of final 3 text types.
- Moderation of writing will continue to embed practices.
- SMT and staff will continue to monitor data in writing
- NELI although beneficial has proved problematic to facilitate as it requires consistent support staff to implement intervention successfully

## Priority 2 - To introduce Play Based Pedagogical Learning in primary 1 and 2 to raise attainment in literacy

What did we set out to do?

- To provide learners with high-quality learning experiences through play during the early stages of primary school.
- To ensure practice is led by a clear, shared vision across the school.
- To creating learning environments that feature thoughtful interactions, experiences, and spaces can take place.
- Enable practitioners to be skilled and knowledgeable in play pedagogy theory and practice.

Progress

- Seven sessions of professional development for primary 1 teacher on effective play-based teaching methods and assessment.
- Staff development of a curriculum that incorporates play-based learning activities aligned with CFE.
- Dynamic classroom spaces were created which supported various types of play, including imaginative play, sensory play, and physical play.
- Outdoor learning environments were used to encourage exploration and physical activity.
- Staff collaboration with local schools to share knowledge and expertise of play pedagogy.
- Regularly reviewed and adapted of play-based activities to ensure they meet the developmental needs of the learners.

## Impact

The implementation of these strategies has shown impact and progress in several areas.

- Learners exhibit problem-solving skills, creativity, and critical thinking abilities through structured play activities.
- On going development of social skills, including cooperation, sharing, and conflict resolution, have been noted during group play activities.
- Improved fine and gross motor skills through activities that involve physical movement and manipulation of objects.
- Data show steady progress in learning for almost all children in numeracy and literacy.
- Teachers report increased confidence in delivering play-based learning.

## Next Steps

There will be a continued focus on play pedagogy within the primary 1 & 2 cohort to embed the approaches and practices used in session 2023-24 into current year by:

- Continuing to purchase resources to further strengthen the effectiveness of this approach, where required.
- Ensuring practice is led by a clear, shared vision across the school.
- Embed play based learning environments where thoughtful interactions and learning experiences can take place for pupils.
- Begin to use inquiry-based learning with older pupils.

## Priority 3 -Embark on creating a consistent progressive approach to skills development across all schools in Biggar Learning Community to increase creativity and employability

### Strategy

The school has prioritised the development of a consistent and progressive approach to skills development throughout the Learning Community. The implementation of the new South Lanarkshire Council Framework aimed to provide a structured method for students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering their ability to discuss themselves as learners, set relevant targets, transfer skills to new contexts, and prepare for future work environments.

What did we set out to do?

1. Develop a shared understanding and language around the development of skills by using the SLC Framework as a scaffold.
2. Give stakeholders a better understanding of skills development
3. Develop staff's understanding of the SLC Skills framework
4. Children will use the language in the framework to discuss themselves and set personal targets.

### Progress

- All school staff participated in an introductory session on the new SLC Framework, followed by a workshop to discuss implementation strategies tailored to their specific contexts (e.g., "Skill of the Month," focusing on one capacity per term, creating a learning wall, developing characters for each skill).
- Staff gained a comprehensive understanding of the SLC Framework and collaboratively developed practical ideas for integrating it into their teaching practices.
- Staff introduced children to the language of Skills
- School actively worked on integrating the SLC Framework into their daily routines and curriculum, tailoring activities to meet learners specific needs.
- School provided a presentation showcasing the implementation process, challenges faced, and successes achieved. This allowed for cross-school learning and sharing of best practices.

## Impact

- The workshop facilitated a shared vision and fostered a sense of collective commitment among staff to enhance skills development in a structured and engaging manner.
- The structured approach led to a more consistent and focused effort in skills development, with initial observations indicating improved student engagement and skill acquisition
- The presentations highlighted significant improvements in students' ability to recognise and develop their skills, enhanced teacher confidence in delivering skills-based education, and positive feedback from the learning community. This reflection and sharing session also identified areas for further improvement and collaboration, fostering a culture of continuous development and support.
- Clear guidelines and resources for teachers to integrate skills development into their lesson plans and assessments.
- Children were able to discuss their own personal skill development
- Students demonstrate greater self-awareness and ownership of their learning process, as evidenced by their ability to articulate strengths and areas for improvement.
- Increased motivation and engagement as students set and pursue their own development goals.
- Real-world applications of skills have led to a deeper understanding and retention of learned concepts.

## Next Steps

The strategies implemented have ensured consistent skills focus within the school has taken place.

Continued focus during session 2023-24 on:

- pupils' confidence in identifying skills and using skills language in learning and teaching
- parental involvement
- providing visual aids to enhance comprehension and usability

Keeping this priority from 2024-25 session will further strengthen the framework's effectiveness and ensure long-term success.

## Priority 4- Further develop links with families and wider local community to improve experiences for learners

### Strategy

The priority is to ensure that the curriculum is coherent and relevant to our pupils by engaging with the wider school community to develop a Curriculum Rationale. This initiative aims to improve learning experiences for all pupils, enabling them to recognize their own strengths and development needs.

### What did we set out to do?

- To ensure that the curriculum is coherent and relevant to our pupils by engaging with the wider school community to develop a Curriculum Rationale.
- This initiative aimed to develop schools' understanding of our own unique local context

### Progress

- We conducted consultations with parents, pupils, staff, and the local community to gather insights on what our curriculum should be, priorities and how to make it relevant to our pupils' lives and aspirations for the future.
- Data was used to create a draft Curriculum Rationale outlining the educational goals, core values, and essential skills the curriculum aims to develop.



### Impact

- Reassessing our curriculum has helped to make learning more relevant and engaging for pupils by connecting educational content to our local context and pupil interests.
- It has encouraged parental involvement reflection and evaluation of the school curriculum
- The data gathered from consultations was used to ensure that the curriculum reflects the values and needs of the school community.

### Next Steps

- Develop our Curriculum Rationale by engaging with the wider school community has made significant progress during session 2023-24. This priority will move to our Maintenance agenda as we continue in session 2024-25 to:
  - To share draft Curriculum Rationale with staff and parents.
  - To amend Curriculum Rationale as necessary considering future consultations with stakeholders.