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East Dunbartonshire Council

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St Nicholas' Primary School



Standards and Quality Report 2023/24

Context of the School

St Nicholas' Primary is a co-educational, denominational school which is situated in Bearsden, serving the surrounding area of Bearsden and Milngavie.

This session our teaching team consists of 18.4 full time equivalent teachers and 0.4 education support. Within this allocation, there is a Head Teacher and 2 Depute Head Teachers. The school is supported well by administrative staff, classroom assistants and support for learning assistants. The staff forms a cohesive and effective team aiming to deliver high quality education.

Currently we have 291 learners in our school and the majority of the school population live in SIMD bands 17-20, with 5% of the school population living in SIMD bands 1-4. 8% of the school population receive FME entitlement and 12% of our learners speak an additional language at home. Overall attendance in St Nicholas' is very good with the average annual attendance being above 95%. Through rigorous self-evaluation and analysis of attainment data we endeavour to develop an intervention programme for identified pupils in order to address the poverty related attainment gap.

Our school building opened in August 2018 and consists of 17 classrooms, a variety of open areas throughout the school, a gym hall and a dining hall. Within our playground, we have a large pitch, a trim trail, seating areas, a basketball court and various grassed areas.

Parents are highly committed to supporting the school community and the Parent Council have continued to work cooperatively with the school, meeting regularly via teams. A Parent Association has been established this session which organised some social and fundraising events for our community. Parent helpers are welcome and frequently assist with school outings. There are a number of extra-curricular activities including football and netball. Pupil participation is encouraged through our pupil leadership groups which every child is part of.

Links with the local and wider community, including the local Parishes of St. Andrew's and St Joseph's, are fostered through on-going curricular and community work. We have well established links with local early years establishments, Turnbull High school and its associated primary schools as well as the local secondary schools within Bearsden and Milngavie.

Progress in School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities

School priority 1: Reading	
<p>NIF Priority Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children</p> <p>NIF Driver parent / carer involvement and engagement school improvement teacher professionalism curriculum and assessment school leadership</p>	<p>HGIOS 4</p> <p>QI 1.2 Leadership of Learning</p> <p>QI 1.3 Leadership of Change</p> <p>QI 2.2 Curriculum</p> <p>QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment</p> <p>QI 2.5 Family Learning</p> <p>QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</p>
<p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>There has been good progress made in this priority. This session, all staff have participated in professional learning in relation to reading through our curriculum development sessions. This professional learning was supported by Education Scotland and all staff undertook professional reading and research to ensure that staff skills and knowledge were refreshed in line with current research.</p> <p>Through collaborative working, there is now a clear understanding of the progressive reading skills and strategies that our learners should develop and we have had opportunities to moderate these across the school. Following the input, almost all staff report that their knowledge and confidence in teaching phonics has improved. Almost all staff report that they are now more confident in the direct teaching of reading strategies including prediction, making connections, inference and main idea / theme. Almost all staff report that they now focus on the teaching of new vocabulary in a deeper and more meaningful way and almost all staff report that they now provide a greater range of appropriate read-to-write tasks.</p> <p>In addition to developing a progressive approach to teaching the reading strategies through a range of skills, staff have developed their use of assessment in order to inform next steps in learning and teaching. At class and school level, data has been analysed and any identified trends or gaps have been discussed and next steps in terms of learning and teaching and interventions have been agreed. According to standardised information gathered at the beginning of the year, most of our learners were in line with the national average in terms of reading skills. This data was then used by class teachers to further develop appropriate read-to-write tasks to ensure that all learners have the opportunity to record their understanding in a way that meets their needs and demonstrates their reading skills. This data was also used to identify learners who would benefit from specific interventions. These interventions have had a positive impact on most of our learners in terms of increased reading ages. In addition to our intervention programme, adaptations to learning and teaching based on data has allowed us to ensure appropriate challenge for our learners. This has also had a positive impact on our learners, with the majority of our P2 and P7 learners now working beyond the expected level as well as an increase in the number of learners working beyond their expected level in P3, P4 and P5.</p> <p>As part of this priority, we aimed to establish an enhanced reading culture in our school. By refreshing our class and school libraries we have ensured that we are catering for our diverse community and following the equality policy. Through events such as class reading cafés, Read, Write, Count events and other reading initiatives, learners have increased motivation for reading. There has been a high parental attendance for all reading cafes in P4-7 and almost all parents highlighted how much they enjoyed the experience. The Read, Write, Count event for P1-3 was well attended by parents. Almost all children had a parent present for the parental read, write and count workshop before visiting their child's classroom to engage with a variety of activities based on the gifted bags. The P5-7 reading parent workshop was well attended and the presentation was shared with all parents from P5-7 on Seesaw. The feedback from this</p>	

event was positive with many parents highlighting that they were very pleased to receive the presentation as there were links for some resources and book recommendations to explore further with their child.

We have embarked on our Reading School journey and been awarded our bronze award.

Next Steps:

- To further moderate learning, teaching and assessment in reading
- To continue to use reliable data to inform next steps in learning and teaching
- To continue to enhance our reading culture through the Reading School Programme

School priority 2: Outdoor Learning/ Partnership working

NIF Priority

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

NIF Driver

teacher professionalism
parent / carer involvement and engagement
school improvement
curriculum and assessment

HGIOS 4 QIs

QI 1.2 Leadership of Learning

QI 2.2 Curriculum

QI 2.4 Personalised Support

Progress and Impact:

There has been good progress made in this priority this year. Staff professional learning has focused on ensuring that our existing curriculum pathways in literacy and numeracy are delivered in a variety of settings, ensuring we are meeting the needs of all learners. All staff have access to a shared folder with a wealth of outdoor lesson ideas and almost all staff report that this is a useful resource which provides inspiration for outdoor learning. All classes now have access to a grab bag to support regular outdoor learning; almost all staff have indicated that this has made the transition to learning outdoor easier. All staff report that their confidence in delivering outdoor learning has improved and most staff have increased their frequency of outdoor learning.

Almost all classes have further developed their learning out of school through visits to museums, art galleries etc. A few classes have used the local green space to develop learning in our own local community. Our parents and local community have supported almost all classes, making links to the world of work as well as skills for learning and life.

Pupil leadership groups, including the Playground and Gardening Group have been established to ensure pupil voice is at the heart of developing our outdoor space. The underlying aim across both groups is to develop partnership with our parents and local community to utilise our school grounds to enhance the learning experience of all our learners. Both groups have action plans in place and the playground group has carried out an audit of the playground. The Gardening group have worked in partnership with the church to design a peace garden in the school grounds, which will provide a quiet, reflective space to support our learner's wellbeing. The Gardening group have also supported the church community in maintaining their peace garden and were involved in a winter clean up and spring planting session. The leadership group have allocated a raised bed to all classes so that they can grow their own food next session.

There has been significant progress made in P1 and 2 with regards to play pedagogy. Development work on the learning environment has been supported by EDC's Early Years officers, who engaged in quality professional dialogue with staff. Throughout the session, staff regularly adapted their learning environment to ensure it is reinforcing and developing skills in literacy and numeracy as well as enhancing and developing social skills, creativity and enquiry. Improvements to the play learning environment was

recognised by the Early Years Officers. Almost all staff feel more confident in their approach to delivering quality learning through play.

An enquiry based play approach has been introduced at the P3 level, this is at the early stages of development. Observations indicate that pupil involvement and engagement using this approach has been high and this enquiry approach will continue to be developed at the P3 stage, with a focus on skill development.

This session, all Primary 1 and Primary 2 staff attended a series of professional learning sessions, led by the EDC STEM Development Officer. The professional learning was focused on supporting the development of STEM through Play. Staff worked collaboratively to identify and plan STEM provocations and projects and they identified annual themes and contexts for learning through STEM which will now be incorporated into future planning. The professional learning and collaborative working has built capacity in staff, and most staff are producing regular STEM experiences. Pupil engagement and involvement in STEM provocations and investigation areas are observed to be high. All infant staff have indicated that their confidence in delivering STEM through Play has improved.

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There has been good progress in using the outdoor environment to support Play pedagogy. This session the infant staff have begun to develop outdoor learning zones. These zones include resources which support the planned learning as well as investigative free play outdoors. Resources have been organised into trollies which are wheeled out to the playground each day for the children's independent access.

Access to the outdoors in the infant department has improved with freedom of choice to move between the indoor and outdoor environments being piloted this session. Staff have recently implemented weekly cross stage working sessions for P1-3 learners. Each session is planned with a particular focus, where the learners work together on a project such as planting or creating bug hotels. Engagement levels for almost all learners during this joint working is high. All infant staff have reported that their confidence in using the outdoor environment to support play pedagogy has improved.

Next Steps:

- Continue to embed outdoor learning as part of the daily and weekly experience of all learners
- Audit and identify next steps in terms of play pedagogy in P1 to P3
- To continue to foster links with our community/partners in order to the enhance the learning experience of all.

School priority 3: Develop rights based learning in partnership with the Catholic Faith

NIF Priority

Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre
Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

NIF Driver

school leadership
school improvement

HGIOS 4 QIs

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change

QI 2.2 Curriculum

QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality & inclusion

Progress and Impact:

We have made good progress in this priority. As a Catholic school our Gospel Values are at the heart of everything we do. This session, all staff attended professional learning led by the Archdiocese of Glasgow, that provided us with an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Gospel in relations to developing rights based learning within our school. All classes have a class charter that links to children's rights and our values. These are regular discussed as part of whole school events such as assemblies and as part of

daily classroom practice. Most children can reflect on their Gospel values and their rights and in the majority of classes there have been opportunities to link these to their ongoing learning. Throughout the school we have opportunities to engaged with rights and understand the impact they have on our daily lives here in St Nicholas' Primary School.

Another aspect of this priority was to raise awareness of the invite from Pope Francis and his mission for all schools to engage with Laudato Si. This again links with our Gospel Values and our rights based learning. Staff had another opportunity to deepen their understanding of how the Gospel message drives Pope Francis' mission by undertaking further CLPL from the Archdiocese of Glasgow. This has allowed all staff to demonstrate how our faith and the Gospel can foster "Ecological Education" in our school. As a community of Faith and Learning, all staff and pupils participated in a service of commitment and through whole school and class activities have put our faith into action to ensure the needs of all are being addressed within our community and the wider world.

Next Steps:

- Continue to develop rights based learning and Laudato Si at class and whole school level
- To moderate learning, teaching and assessment of RE across the school to ensure the high quality experience for all our learners.

Progress in National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

School tracking of NIF levels at P1, P4 and P7 show high levels of attainment over time with most achieving their appropriate level in literacy and numeracy. There has been an improvement in Reading, Writing and Numeracy in P7 compared to last session and an increase in attainment in Reading and Listening and Talking at the P7 stage.

Tracking evidenced shows that most learners are on track in Literacy and Numeracy. This session almost all learners in P1 and P7 will attain appropriate CFE levels in Literacy and Numeracy and in P4 most learners will achieve their appropriate CFE levels. Teachers are developing their use of assessment in order to make secure judgments in achievement of a level. The data discussed above was not unexpected due to our robust tracking and monitoring procedures.

Through specific interventions and additional staffing, we have tried to address any gaps. Although the data would show that not all gaps have been closed, most learners have made good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

The promotion of equity is at the heart of all we endeavour to achieve here at St Nicholas' Primary. Through our robust quality assurance procedures, we identify learners who, for whatever reason, may be experiencing a barrier to their learning. Their learning is closely monitored to ensure appropriate support and progress is being made. Targeted support (some of which has been supported by PEF funding) has allowed us to provide additional teaching input for identified learners in order to address a specific gap in their learning. We have tried to ensure collaborative working with all those involved by allocating staff to specific classes, in order to ensure that this intervention is providing additionality for the learner and at the same time reinforced as part of their daily/ weekly routine at school and at home.

The focus this year has been on pupil attainment in reading, numeracy and wellbeing. We regularly track our interventions and use data to ensure progress is being made and targets reviewed accordingly. We effectively use a range of reliable data to support those identified or affected by the poverty related gap, being vulnerable or disadvantaged.

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

The school and staff are committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment as well as improving the wellbeing outcomes for all our children. We use the EDC wellbeing survey twice a year to gather views of our learners. This data was analysed by class teachers and any actions identified for groups of learners or individuals. Data was also analysed by SLT and main themes addressed through whole school gatherings.

An important aspect of improving learner's health and wellbeing this session was to further establish pupil leadership groups and enhance pupil voice. This session all pupils have the opportunity to be part of a leadership group. These groups met once a month and have had their own agreed action plan and priorities. These action plans have been evaluated and next steps have been identified for next session in terms of each group and the pupil leadership groups as a whole. Most of our learners are keen for the pupil leadership groups to continue.

Active schools have provided ongoing support with afterschool and lunchtime clubs such as football, minifit and netball. They have also fostered links with local sporting clubs and our children have experience Judo and Rugby. From this our learners have had the opportunity to become more active during and after school as well as developing new skills.

We have a robust ASN cycle with Universal and Targeted Support Plans in place for those learners who require support. Health and Wellbeing Interventions are at class and school level. These include LIAM and Season for Growth which have been supported by additional teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the creating of specific safe spaces for all learners.

Placing the human needs and rights of every child and young person at the centre of Education

Through our agreed vision, values and aims as a Catholic school, our core values are respect, forgiveness, honesty and achieving. This session we have continued our Rights Respecting Journey by focussing on our Catholic values and ensuring that we demonstrate our commitment to children's rights here in St Nicholas' and throughout the world as Jesus has asked us to. Committing to Laudato Si has ensured that we are putting out faith into action ensuring that our children's rights and the rights of others are at the heart of all we do and say. It has allowed us to raise awareness with our learners and provide a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities in relation to rights as well as our Gospel Values.

Attainment and Achievement Data

Curriculum for Excellence Levels at the end of June 2024				
	Reading	Writing	Talking & Listening	Numeracy & Mathematics
Early level by end of P1	almost all	almost all	almost all	almost all
First level by end of P4	most	most	most	most
Second level by end of P7	almost all	almost all	almost all	almost all

Impact of Interventions for Equity and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)

Pupil equity funding secured additional staffing to raise attainment for children at risk of not achieving with a particular focus on narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. This additionality provided the following interventions and impact:

A PEF funded Maths Recovery programme for identified learners was in place this session. Pre assessments are carried out and any identified gaps form the focus of the intervention. Learners take part in 2-3 sessions per week in small groups or as individuals. Following about 6-8 weeks of the intervention, a post-assessment takes place. All PEF identified learners have shown increased attainment measured against the intervention. In addition to the intervention programme for learners not on track, a programme was also established via the PEF funding for those learners on track. This intervention focussed on

identifying gaps in learning and opportunities for challenge for this group. This has had a positive impact with almost all learners reducing their gaps and a few learners being challenge above their working level.

Reading Recovery programme in place for identified learners from P3-7. At the P3 stage, all identified learners' reading age improved beyond the natural three- month cycle. At the P4 stage, all identified learners' reading age improved by at least 6 months over a three-month cycle. At the P5 stage, all identified learners' reading age improved by at least 1 year over a three-month cycle. At the P6 stage, the majority of identified learners' reading age improved by at least 9 months over a three-month cycle. At the P7 stage, all identified learners' reading age improved by at least 9 months over a three-month cycle.

Targeted reading comprehension programme was implemented for identified learners. Using standardised assessments and a related intervention programme, we can demonstrate that most of our identified learners have had an increase in their reading comprehension age. At the P2 and P4 stages almost all learners have improved their comprehension skills, most learners at P7 have had an increase and at P3, P5 and P6 the majority of learners have had an increase in their reading comprehension.

All interventions are driven by data and closely monitored and tracked to ensure they are having impact. As a school we will continue to examine the data we gather, to ensure we use PEF to continue to narrow the poverty related attainment gap within our setting.

Self-evaluations of How Good Is Our School? (4th edition)

Quality indicator	School self-evaluation	Inspection/ Authority evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good	Choose an item.
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good	Choose an item.
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good	Choose an item.
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	Choose an item.

Summary of School Improvement priorities for Session 2024/25

- Continue to raise attainment through implementation and moderation of Reading skills and strategies
- Raise attainment in Numeracy with a clear focus on the learning, teaching and assessment in Numeracy and Maths
- Ethos and Culture of our Catholic School- Self Evaluation focus to include Circle

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

All staff are committed to improving outcomes for all learners and work closely with parents to ensure a shared understanding regarding next steps in learning. Almost all pupils and parents comment positively on the work of the school. We will continue to strive to involve all of our parents in the life and work of the school, ensuring we are providing the best education for all learners.

The school has a clear vision for improvement over the next 3 years. Through a focus on data informed approaches to learning, teaching and assessment and rigorous self-evaluation the school is well placed to achieve this, in partnership with pupils, staff, parents, community stakeholders.