

## **St. Nicholas' Primary School**



### **Standards and Quality Report 2024/25**

## Context of the School

St Nicholas' Primary School is a co-educational, denominational school which is situated in Bearsden, serving the surrounding area of Bearsden and Milngavie. It opened in August 2018.

Our building is modern and purpose-built to deliver the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence. It 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 3G multi-weather pitch, a trim trail, seating areas, a basketball court and various grassed areas.

This session, our teaching team consists of 15.2 full time equivalent teachers. Within this allocation, there is a Head Teacher, a Depute Head Teacher and a Principal Teacher. The school is well supported by a dedicated team of 2 full time equivalent Classroom Assistants, 3.1 full time equivalent Support for Learning Assistants, and a 1 full-time equivalent Housekeeper supporting the teachers in their responsibilities. Our office team consists of 1 full time equivalent Administration Assistant, and 1.57 full time equivalent Clerical Assistants. Working collaboratively, all of our staff members contribute to ensuring the delivery of a high quality education linked to our curriculum and the Scottish Catholic Schools Charter.

Our school mission is informed by the Scottish Catholic Schools Charter and Jesus as Teacher – the way, the truth, the life. Spiritual and Faith formation is an essential part of the educational experiences for pupils and staff at St. Nicholas' Primary School. Our school encompasses Catholic Social Teaching throughout our pupils' experiences of Curriculum for Excellence. This is reflected in our school vision, values and aims and our commitment to the Gospel values.

Currently, we have 274 learners in our school and the majority of the school population live in SIMD bands 17-20 (64%), with 3% of the school population living in SIMD bands 1-4. 9% of our school population receive FME entitlement and 13% of our learners identify as having English as an additional language. Overall, attendance in St. Nicholas' is very good with an average annual attendance being above 95%.

At St. Nicholas' Primary School, we use rigorous self-evaluation and analysis of attainment data to challenge and support our pupils. Our committed staff team develop intervention programmes for identified pupils in order to address the poverty-related attainment gap and seek to provide challenging educational experiences that engage our pupils taking into consideration the high attainment in our school.

Our pupils receive opportunities to experience wider achievements with every pupil given the opportunity to participate in a leadership group linked to educational and faith development. At Primary 6 and Primary 7 stages, our pupils participate in the Pope Francis Faith Awards demonstrating commitment and acts of Faith. As part of their faith journey, our children are supported in their sacramental preparation at Primary 3, Primary 4 and Primary 7 stages.

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.

St. Nicholas' Primary has developed links with the local and wider community. This includes the local Parishes of St. Andrew's and St Joseph's and their associated ministry groups. Pupils are regular participants at first Friday Mass every month, celebrate Holidays of Obligation in our school in addition to other spiritual and faith development retreats led by the Church.

Parents are highly committed to supporting our school community. The Parent Council works cooperatively with the school, meeting regularly throughout the school year. A Parent Teacher Association has been established this session and is committed to organising social and fundraising events for our community. Parent helpers are welcomed and frequently assist with school outings.

## Progress in School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities

School priority 1: Developing Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
<p><b>NIF Priority</b> Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p><b>NIF Driver</b> school leadership teacher professionalism curriculum and assessment</p>	<p><b>HGIOS 4 QIs</b> QI 1.2 Leadership of Learning QI 1.3 Leadership of Change QI 2.2 Curriculum QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</p>
<p><b>Progress and Impact:</b> This session, our staff have participated in professional learning experiences to enhance learning, teaching and assessment within our school. Almost all teachers have participated in quality assurance and self-evaluation activities of current learning and teaching to enhance our provision. These activities have led to an increased awareness and knowledge of the tenants of effective learning and teaching and progress has been very good as we work as a team to enhance the learning provision at St. Nicholas' Primary School.</p> <p>Almost all staff have participated in collegiate professional learning activities to develop our approaches to learning and teaching. Staff development sessions were led by the Principal Teacher and focused on the use of abstract, pictorial, and concrete resources to create depth to pupil's learning experiences. Further collegiate sessions had a Number Talks focus. These learning experiences have been quality assured with all staff engaging in professional visits where almost all staff are developing emergent skills within this area.</p> <p>Following self-evaluation, our further collegiate time was dedicated to establishing effective and engaging teaching and learning techniques. Our collegiate sessions developed pupil engagement in learning through clear learning intentions and co-constructing the success criteria with our pupils. Initially, this was directed at maths and numeracy lessons. Almost all staff demonstrated increasing confidence in using learning intentions effectively in their lessons. Less than half of teachers were able to co-construct the success criteria with pupils and further development of this aspect is required to ensure this becomes an embedded approach at St. Nicholas' Primary. Next session, our collegiate activities will seek to develop learning intentions and success criteria across our curriculum and embed this practise. Further development aspects including differentiation, effective questioning and meta-cognition skills will become a focus for improvement through participation in the Improving our Pedagogy professional learning with the West Partnership.</p> <p>Almost all staff have participated in moderation of learning and teaching approaches within the context of numeracy and mathematics. Opportunities were provided for staff to learn from their peers demonstrating effective practise. Less than half of staff engaged with directed professional reading to support their engagement in this process and enhance their skills and knowledge of the features of effective practice. Further strategies will be implemented next session to continue to develop a learning culture within the school.</p> <p>This session, our school has used a robust standardised assessment calendar to support teacher judgement with pupil progress. Almost all staff have engaged with standardised assessments in numeracy and reading. These assessments have been used to inform planning of experiences and outcomes for almost all children. They have been used to ensure appropriate support programmes are available to children in accordance with identified gaps in learning. This has developed professional conversations within the school with most staff developing their capacity to utilise this information effectively.</p> <p>We also introduced Numeracy Breakfasts as part of National Numeracy Week with a focus on each year group from Primary 4 to Primary 7. Less than half of parents attended however, feedback was very positive</p>	

as parents and pupils played games with newly introduced Cuisenaire Rods as a resource to support the development of numeracy skills.

**Next Steps:**

- To embed effective teaching and learning techniques that have been introduced this session. This will be delivered through participation in the Improving out Pedagogy Program with the West Partnership.
- To embed the use of abstract, concrete, pictorial pedagogy in aspects of our maths curriculum.
- To undertake targeted literacy interventions by participating in the Reading Recovery Program and using moderation activities to introduce the Equity in Literacy Toolkit.

**School priority 2: Development of Reading**

**NIF Priority**

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children  
Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

**NIF Driver**

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

**HGIOS 4 QIs**

QI 1.2 Leadership of Learning  
QI 1.3 Leadership of Change  
QI 2.2 Curriculum  
QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment  
QI 2.5 Family Learning  
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

**Progress and Impact:**

Good progress has been made with this improvement priority this session with consideration given to our reading pedagogy and the development of our reading curriculum.

This session, almost all teachers have implemented a new St. Nicholas' approach to delivering teaching and learning of our reading curriculum. New planners have been used to ensure a broad range of progressive reading experiences and outcomes is taught with consistency across the whole school. This approach has been complimented with a strong calendar of reading assessments used to monitor the progress of almost all learners. This data is analysed and used to inform teaching decisions throughout the year including the identification of next steps in pupil's learning and the allocation of targeted interventions in accordance with a pupil's learning needs.

Whilst there has been a clear, progressive curricular planning of our reading curriculum implemented, our pupil focus groups and self-evaluation reflect a need to enhance and improve our teaching and learning, and ongoing formative assessment approaches generally to ensure a strong and consistent approach across all classes.

Our school has developed a literacy-week approach, linked to our new reading planners, to deliver our reading and writing. Whilst this has maintained our high attainment, evaluations from most teachers report that it can be very busy and challenging to deliver.

Pupil focus groups were established last session to ensure our children have a voice about their experiences of our reading curriculum. From these focus groups, our pupils identified almost all teachers were using assessment is for learning strategies such as learning intentions and success criteria however, this was dependent on the curricular area and was inconsistent across the school.

Our Principal Teacher led a calendar of Read, Write, Count parent and pupil engagement sessions this year. These were well attended by parents and involved sharing strategies to engage children at home with print and establishing the building blocks for success in reading. Almost all parents stated that these sessions were beneficial and worthwhile. During these sessions, teaching staff modelled techniques to

support pupils and parents at home. Again, almost all parents commented that this was useful and by the time of the evaluation, they had tried some of these strategies at home.

During World Book Day, our Junior Management Team planned and organised a book swap event. This event was focused on ensuring all children received a book and continuing to establish a culture of reading for enjoyment aligned with the Reading Schools accreditation. Children brought in stories that they had read and swapped these for a different book. Almost all pupils left this event with a new book. This event was complimented with our Reading Café approach this year. Each class held a reading café where parents and grandparents were invited in to the school to read with the children. Our pupils were able to share the books that they read with an emphasis on developing an interest in reading for culture and the promotion of a culture that exemplifies a love of books. Further to fostering a passion for reading, almost all classes have set aside time in class to ensure our pupils experience a love of reading by listening to texts. This has provided a positive experience for our children.

Across our school, all children have had the opportunity to participate in a reading café. Almost all of the parent feedback has identified that they enjoyed engaging in these sessions where children discussed books they are reading for enjoyment.

Our Reading Cafés were introduced this year to promote and encourage reading for enjoyment in school and beyond in to the home environment. These sessions were led by each class teacher over one 30 minute session in the academic session. Overwhelmingly, these sessions were well received by parents/grandparents. Almost all parents had identified that they had enjoyed the opportunity to come in to the school to read with their child and find out about authors they were aware of and/or had an interest in.

**Next Steps:**

- To continue to develop literacy in our school by working towards the achievement of the Reading Schools Award as a whole school.
- To review our approach to our literacy week as a staff team.
- To participate in Reading Recovery to support the acquisition of reading skills as an early intervention.

**School priority 3: Religious Education in a Roman Catholic School and the development of our school ethos.**

<p><b>NIF Priority</b> 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</p> <p><b>NIF Driver</b> school leadership curriculum and assessment</p>	<p><b>HGIOS?4 QIs</b></p> <p>QI 1.5 Management of resources to promote equity</p> <p>QI 2.2 Curriculum</p> <p>QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality &amp; inclusion</p>
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**Progress and Impact:**

This session, almost all teaching staff participated in a cluster in-service afternoon working collegiately with our fellow denominational school staff to consider the Global Compact on education. Our school was focussed on addressing two of the core aims of the Global Compact – *Take Care of the Common Home* and *To make Human Persons the Centre*. These aspects were interwoven into our specific Faith and spiritual development opportunities and our participation in developing the CIRCLE framework to create inclusive spaces in our school.

Almost all staff engaged with a presentation about the Global Compact and the seven pillars which described the key commitments of each educational establishment. Prior to attendance at the inservice day, all staff had completed a self-evaluation questionnaire to identify their knowledge and understanding

of Catholic Social Teaching and the core tenants of our Faith. Most staff identified that they are aware of the core tenants of our Faith with most recognising that they require further support to enhance their skills and knowledge to effectively teach these aspect to our pupils.

During the In-service day collaboration with denominational cluster schools, some teachers shared their evidence of an effective RERC lesson to engage and motivate our pupils in their Faith development. We will build on this next session. Prior to this engagement, almost all of our teachers had participated in peer observations and had reported that the quality of RERC lessons was good. As part of our improvement plan next session, we will begin to explore this in greater detail to identify improvements which can be made at classroom level to build on the areas of effective teaching and learning. This will dovetail with our improvement work to increase our capacity to deliver effective teaching and learning across all areas of the curriculum.

Our school has begun our journey to becoming a Laudato Si school. A pupil leadership group has been established to lead our commitment to Laudato Si. The leadership group has undertaken a commitment to the goals – *Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles* and *Ecological Spirituality*. Almost all pupils are aware of the call to action through Pope Francis' Laudato Si Encyclical and the goal of *Sustainable Lifestyles* with specific school actions focussed on recycling and ensuring lights are used in classrooms only as required. Posters are displayed around the school displaying these messages.

The Laudato Si leadership group are at the early stages of developing a prayer garden in the school grounds as a place for spiritual reflection.

To support our commitment to respect God's creation of the world, our pupils have supported a commitment to recycle and reuse initiatives. Our Laudato Si principles were modelled by our Junior Management Team. They created a swap shop for Christmas Jumpers. This has seen a few pupils and their families participate. Our World Book Day swap shop was more successful, as discussed earlier in this report, almost all children were provided with a pre-loved book.

Our commitment to recognising and promoting the goals of the Laudato Si encyclical has been recognised in our wider community. Working the Youth Ministries Group from St. Joseph's and St. Andrew's Parishes, a few pupils participated in a service to mark the Season of Creation linked to the goals of Laudato Si. The prayer service was supplemented with offerings of Laudato Si art work produced by almost all pupils.

Our Laudato Si commitments form part of a larger action plan from the school to reduce the Cost of the School Day for families within our community. Working collaboratively with our Parent Council, a position statement has been created considering the principles of the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland and using the Cost of the School Day Toolkit. This position statement ensures almost all families have an annual calendar of potential additional costs to ensure planning or support from the school can be sought.

In the last term of school, we implemented weekly Gospel Values certificates linked to our school values and to promote our actions in Faith. These certificates are representative of the values that are important to our school community. This will be underpinned by a St. Nicholas' approach which exemplifies what these values look like in class and around our school.

At St. Nicholas' Primary, we are at the early stages of engaging with the CIRCLE framework to create inclusive classrooms within our school. A CIRCLE leadership group was created led by our CIRCLE advisors. Self-evaluation using the Circle Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS) took place where almost all teaching staff evaluated their classroom environment and used these evaluations to construct an action plan for implementation across this session. These plans were focussed on the development of the physical space and ensuring this was inclusive for all of our pupils.

Almost all class teachers have decluttered their environments to some extent and considered their class layout. Given the identification of attainment barriers in our school in accordance with additional needs, almost all teachers have now adjusted classroom organisation and management techniques including the layout of information on whiteboards to ensure this is accessible to all children. More specifically, this relates to, in almost all classes, the layout of work programmes and, learning intentions and success criteria. The accessibility of this information has improved the learning experiences for most children as identified in recent pupil focus groups.

Further to this, it has been established that labelling of our environment is essential to develop the independence of our pupils and their language acquisition given the number of pupils with English as an Additional language. A format for labelling – including an image and text – has been established and our working party has created a bank of these resources to ensure sustainability and consistency of labelling.

Our CIRCLE advisor met with our Junior Management Team to establish a St. Nicholas' approach to our expectations aligned to our school values and the principles of CIRCLE. This was constructed by our pupils. Next session, we will embed this in our practise to further enhance our environment and ensure a consistent, whole-school approach.

#### Next Steps:

- To encourage staff to engage in personal professional development activities linked to the pillars of our Faith - e.g. sacred mysteries – to enhance learning and teaching in RERC.
- To implement the first year of the RERC planners to enhance teaching and learning.
- To develop Laudato Si across our curriculum with links to other curricular areas.
- To develop a Faith into action leadership group and establish regular prayer and reflection in our prayer garden.

### Progress in National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people;
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing.

At St. Nicholas' Primary School, it should be noted that 5% of pupils across the whole school reside in SIMD 1-2 and therefore this may be considered to cause a statistical anomaly to our data regarding closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Our mission at St. Nicholas' is to improve attainment for all children with a focus on literacy and numeracy outcomes.

Bi-annual wellbeing assessments have informed our planning and interventions. These assessments have prompted health and wellbeing conversations with pupils however, generally these are check-ins. This assessment programme is dovetailed with daily health and wellbeing check-ins in each class to ensure early and proactive support can be directed to our children. In addition to this, our Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils participated in the SHINE Mental Health Survey in association with the University of Glasgow. Overall, the results of this survey were positively greater the national norms in almost all measures including *General Health* with almost all pupils reporting highly in terms of happiness and liking school.

This session, we held our first Careers Fair with almost all children having the opportunity to visit a wide variety of people who work in various roles. This was a successful event which demonstrated our commitment to ensuring our children are aware of the skills knowledge required to prepare them for the world of work. Further work is required to embed this into our curriculum with links to meta-skills.

### Attainment and Achievement Data

Curriculum for Excellence Levels at the end of June 2025				
	Reading	Writing	Talking & Listening	Numeracy & Mathematics
Early level by end of P1	most	most	almost all	almost all
First level by end of P4	almost all	most	most	almost all
Second level by end of P7	almost all	most	almost all	almost all

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

This session, our PEF interventions have focused on developing a programme of supports overseen by our PEF teacher. We have used an approach aimed at improving our toolkit of supports to reach the children who require them.

Firstly, this member of staff has worked to build the capacity of teaching staff and support staff to deliver a suite of interventions including Rainbow Reading, Nessy, five-minute box and Maths Recovery. These interventions have increased attainment of almost all children according to our assessment data.

We also used our PEF to create a more robust assessment programme using standardised assessments across primary2, primary 3, primary 5 and primary 6. These assessments have been utilised using the supports identified through the assessment.

Whilst these interventions have had a positive impact on the children, they have been used to support children who annually require support. Next session, our approach to PEF will be used to build the capacity of our staff to deliver the tenants of effective teaching and learning.

Self-evaluations of How Good Is Our School? (4<sup>th</sup> 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	Good	Choose an item.
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	Choose an item.

Summary of School Improvement priorities for Session 2025/26

- 1. Learning, Teaching and Assessment across the curriculum
- 2. Inclusive CIRCLE Framework Year 2
- 3. Laudato Si and the Rights of the Child

What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

At St. Nicholas' Primary School, we are continuing to develop our capacity for continuous improvement. Whilst we have a robust quality assurance calendar and evaluation process capturing the views of pupils, parents and staff, we are working collegiately to ensure school self-evaluation is reflective of our school community. Our ability to identify areas of improvement within the school is essential for us to continue on our journey to excellence.

Further to this, the capacity of our team to take forward improvement activities continues to be supported to develop sustainability of our identified priorities. To support this process, we are engaging with local authority supports and West Partnership accredited improvement activities to develop the skills and knowledge of almost all teachers to engage, learn and sustain improvements.

As we continue to develop our improvement activities, staff leadership requires support to develop and sustain improvements. Informal leadership at classroom level is essential to embed and sustain school improvements.