

Summarised inspection findings

St Matthew's Primary School

East Dunbartonshire Council

18 November 2025

Key contextual information

St. Matthew’s Primary School is a Roman Catholic school serving Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire. The headteacher was appointed to the role in March 2025, following a twenty-month period serving as acting headteacher. She is supported by a senior leadership team comprised of a depute headteacher and an acting principal teacher, who both took up post in August 2025. The school roll is 259 children, organised across eleven classes, including one composite class.

Around half of all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles nine and ten. A few children live in SIMD decile one. Children’s attendance is generally above the national average. There have been no children excluded from school in recent years. In September 2024, the school reported that 16% of children had an identified additional support need.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
This 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: - n learning and engagement - n quality of teaching - n effective use of assessment - n planning, tracking and monitoring	
n The headteacher works effectively with all staff to create a positive climate for learning across the school. This climate is supported by the school values of learning, love, faith and justice, underpinned by the Gospel Values. Staff and children enjoy mutually respectful relationships. Almost all staff apply nurturing principles in their daily interactions with children. These positive relationships help almost all children to demonstrate appropriate behaviours consistently and to interact with adults and peers positively. All teachers use class charters that are co-created with children well to set clear expectations of behaviour and conduct. A few teachers use class charters meaningfully to support children’s learning about their rights.	
n The children and their positive attitude towards their learning is a considerable strength of the school. Almost all children are highly motivated and engage with tasks and activities with enthusiasm. They are welcoming, articulate and proud of their school. At times, a few children disengage from learning when tasks are overly teacher led. A few teachers should continue to review the balance of teacher-directed and active learning experienced by children to support increased engagement.	
n Most teachers provide children with a range of rich contexts for learning. All children develop skills for learning, life and work, as well as digital skills, successfully through well-planned learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Teachers engage positively with high quality professional learning, founded in educational research. A few teachers lead professional enquiries into different aspects of their teaching practice. This results in children benefitting from highly effective learning experiences across a number of curricular areas. For example, teachers’ well-considered use of spiral learning approaches which result in children retrieving and retaining key knowledge in literacy and numeracy successfully. Most teachers use highly effective visual displays to support children’s learning.	

For example, children take responsibility for leading learning using the displays to help their peers to understand mathematical concepts. The headteacher plans appropriately to bring together strong practice evident across the school and create a learning, teaching and assessment framework. This will help teachers to draw from and embed strong teaching approaches and ensure all children benefit from consistently high-quality learning experiences.

- n Staff use of play to support children's learning in the early years is a significant strength. They use learning spaces creatively to provide a range of stimulating learning environments, which are linked directly to children's interests. Teachers balance child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-directed activities very skilfully. Staff's approaches support improvements in children's literacy, numeracy, creativity and social skills very well. They use regular observations of children during play purposefully to assess children's progress and to identify next steps in learning. Senior leaders plan appropriately to develop further the use of outdoor spaces to support children's learning through play.
- n Staff continue to build on children's learning through play as they progress through the school. They use time constructively in pupil enquiry based learning (PEBL) to encourage children to lead aspects of, and exercise choice in, their learning. A few staff use common topics successfully to link different curricular areas. This helps children to apply their learning in real-life contexts, as well as make clear links between, and understand the relevance of, learning.
- n All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations to children. Most teachers help children to connect their learning by making explicit reference to prior learning. Almost all teachers share the purpose of learning and most reference measures of success in learning routinely. A few teachers should ensure all children understand fully how to demonstrate success in their learning. All teachers should involve children further in co-creating measures of success. This will help children to understand fully their progress and next steps in learning.
- n Almost all teachers use very well-considered questions to check children's knowledge and understanding. Most teachers develop children's higher order thinking skills effectively by encouraging children to think deeply about what and how they learn. Most teachers provide children with helpful feedback on their learning, with clear next steps to support progress. A majority of children speak confidently about their individual targets in literacy and numeracy.
- n Most teachers create inclusive learning environments, designed to meet the needs of all learners. They demonstrate that they know children and their needs very well and adapt the learning environment to include all learners. Children requiring additional support with their learning use digital devices very well to support their learning. Most teachers provide tasks and activities which are well-matched to children's needs and abilities. A few children working at first and second levels require more challenge in their learning. Teachers should continue to support their most able learners to reach their full potential.
- n Teachers adopt highly effective approaches to planning learning. They plan collaboratively over the short, medium and long term and use agreed and clear formats that outline intended learning. Importantly, teachers plan learning, teaching and assessment in an integral way. Most teachers use a range of assessment approaches proactively to check children's progress and then adapt the planned learning to meet the needs of children. They use standardised, summative and formative assessments regularly to measure children's progress. Most teachers use self- and peer- assessments very well to encourage children to reflect on learning.

- n Teachers moderate and share standards in assessment within the school and across the local authority. A few teachers collaborated well with their cluster secondary and primary schools to adopt common approaches to structuring and marking children's writing tasks. Teachers use national Benchmarks appropriately to support their understanding of national standards. As a result, teacher judgements of children's progress in literacy and numeracy are accurate. Senior leaders should develop further opportunities for moderation of planning, learning and assessment, including across other curricular areas.
- n Senior leaders and staff meet regularly to review children's progress in learning. They track and monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing systematically. They identify individual learners who are not on track in their learning and plan appropriate support and interventions to help children to get back on track.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- n 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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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:

- n attainment in literacy and numeracy
- n attainment over time
- n overall quality of learners' achievement
- n equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- n Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Most children across the school achieved appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading, writing and numeracy in P1, P4 and P7 in June 2025. Almost all children in P1, P4 and P7 attained nationally expected CfE levels in listening and talking.
- n Most children who receive additional support for their learning are making appropriate progress towards expected levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and English

- n Overall, most children make very good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- n Across all levels, children listen very well. They use a variety of techniques, such as eye contact and appropriate body language, to communicate well with their peers and adults. At early level, almost all children recognise and say rhyming words with confidence. They listen to and respond appropriately when others are speaking. At first level, almost all children contribute well to group discussions, engaging with others for a range of purposes. A few children at early and first level would benefit from developing their turn taking skills further. At second level, almost all children communicate clearly, audibly and with expression. They answer a range of questions successfully, including literal, inferential and evaluative questions.

Reading

- n Staff and children create a positive culture of reading across the school. The well-stocked school and classroom libraries and protected time for reading in class, encourages children to read for enjoyment.
- n At early level, most children read familiar texts well with appropriate attention to simple punctuation. They use knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to decode words. A few children would benefit from more challenging texts in order to develop their reading skills further. At first level, most children read fluently, decoding unknown words by locating and pronouncing familiar letter patterns and blends. At second level, most children make relevant comments about the structure, characterisation and setting of a text. They talk knowledgeably about how a text makes them feel. At first and second level, a few children should develop further their expression when reading aloud.

Writing

- n At early level, most children form lower case letters legibly. They write well for enjoyment during play and attempt to spell familiar words correctly. A few children should develop their

understanding of the use of capital letters. At first level, most children plan their writing well and use plans to write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. They start sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader. At second level, most children create a range of short and extended texts regularly for different purposes. They use sentences of different lengths and vary sentence openings effectively. Across second level, children would benefit from reviewing and redrafting their writing routinely. This will help them to make improvements based on the feedback they receive. At first and second level, a few children should improve the quality of their handwriting, ensuring that it is neat and legible.

Numeracy and mathematics

- n Overall, most children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Children apply their numeracy skills very well in a range of relevant contexts.

Number, money and measure

- n At early level, most children count forwards and backwards to twenty and beyond. They complete addition and subtraction calculations within ten accurately. A few children are less confident using and recognising money and naming coins. At first level, most children add and subtract numbers accurately. Most children round numbers confidently to the nearest 100. Most children identify the links between multiplication and division. At second level, most children convert simple fractions to decimals and percentages. A few children are less confident converting time between 12 hour and 24 hour notation.

Shape, position and movement

- n Children across all stages demonstrate strong knowledge and understanding of shape, position and movement. At early level, most children recognise and name simple two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. At first level, most children describe and sort 3D objects according to simple criteria. At second level, most children describe the faces, vertices and edges of 3D objects. Most children use correct mathematical language to classify a range of angles.

Information handling

- n At early level, most children interpret simple graphs and charts well. Children at first and second level, use a variety of different methods to display data. At first level, most children answer questions accurately about data in bar graphs and charts. At second level, children use a suitable title, labelling on both axes and use an appropriate scale. All children need further opportunities to apply their skills in displaying data in a variety of ways, including using digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- n Overall, attendance data for session 2024-25 was 95.69%. School attendance data remains consistently high and above that of national and local data. Senior leaders have robust systems to monitor and track the attendance of all children. They act promptly when individual attendance drops below 90%. Senior leaders work effectively with a few children and families to provide well-considered and bespoke support to improve children's attendance. This is resulting in improvements in the attendance of those children. Senior leaders identify families taking holidays during term time as impacting on overall levels of attendance. They promote the importance of regular attendance at school and the impact that non-attendance has on children's attainment. A few children accessed a part-time timetable until recently. Senior leaders and staff worked effectively with families and partners to ensure barriers to children accessing full time education were addressed successfully.
- n The school has maintained high levels of sustained attainment over time. Senior leaders and staff react positively to any decreases in attainment with well-planned interventions, such as

those to improve children's reading and writing skills. Senior leaders use positive systems to track and monitor children's attainment over time. These systems capture children's progress successfully in wellbeing, literacy and numeracy across the school. Senior leaders and staff are well-placed to develop their tracking systems further to monitor the progress of groups and cohorts of children closely. This includes those with additional support needs or those impacted by socio-economic disadvantage. This will help senior leaders and staff to measure more accurately which interventions are supporting positive outcomes for children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- n Staff celebrate children's achievements effectively at assemblies, through wall displays and in monthly class newsletters. Children receive a variety of awards for demonstrating the school values in action. They are proud to receive this recognition which helps them to develop their confidence and self-esteem.
- n Children demonstrate their well-established skills through a range of achievements in and out with school. They develop important skills through their curriculum, including in PEBL and high-quality music experiences delivered by partners. Staff work together with partners to offer children a wide range of high-quality experiences. Children talk positively about the range of clubs and activities offered to them. They develop teamwork skills through sports and performing arts. Groups of children, and particularly those in P4 to P7, adopt meaningful leadership roles. They serve in positions including playground and STEM leaders, and buddies for younger children. Many of the pupil leadership groups have supported the school to achieve national awards and recognition. Children demonstrate well-developed leadership and communication skills through these roles. They speak confidently about the skills they develop and why these are important.
- n Staff are at the early stages of tracking children's participation and skills progression through achievements. They should use the information gathered to target children who require more achievement opportunities. Children should play a key role in identifying what clubs, activities and leadership roles will help them to develop their personal and meta-skills.

Equity for all learners

- n Senior leaders and staff know children and families very well. They understand the challenges faced by families and seek to remove any barriers linked to socio-economic disadvantage. Senior leaders seek to reduce costs associated to the school day. They subsidise trips, provide helpful learning resources and ensure achievement opportunities are provided free of charge. This helps to ensure all children access the range of opportunities offered by the school.
- n Almost all children targeted for pupil equity funding (PEF) achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders use PEF to provide universal supports through additional staffing and resources. They should consider how they clearly measure the impact of interventions on accelerating the progress of targeted children. Senior leaders consult the Parent Council on the planned use of PEF. They plan appropriately to engage with children and the wider parent body to define outcomes and priorities for the use of PEF moving forward.

Other relevant evidence

- n Across the school, children experience a progressive learning pathway in religious education which is linked to the Gospel values. They receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education per week. All children from P1 to P7 learn French and children from P5 to P7 learn Spanish.
- n The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- n Staff engage with very high-quality professional learning exploring aspects of pedagogy that provide children with rich contexts for learning. This includes the school's approaches to maths and numeracy which seeks to make learning in this area memorable and challenging. Teachers use a well-considered spiral learning approach to ensure topics build on each other and ensure children understand the connections and relevance of their learning. The use of learning displays allows children to 'walk the wall' which helps children's retrieval and retention of key mathematical and numeracy concepts. As a result of its positive impact, this approach has been extended to English and literacy.
- n Staff have embedded play successfully into the early years. They use learning spaces creatively to provide a range of stimulating learning environments, directly linked to children's interests. Teachers balance child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-directed activities very skilfully. Importantly, staff regularly observe children during play to measure their progress and to plan next steps in learning. This is supporting positive outcomes for children and ensures they are curious and creative towards their learning.
- n Staff build on children's learning through play as they progress through the school. Children speak very positively about their learning during pupil enquiry based learning. This encourages children to lead aspects of, and exercise choice in, their learning. It helps to support children to have increasing independence in their learning.

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.