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**East Dunbartonshire Council**

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St Helen's PS

Standards and Quality Report

2024/25

We are a

**Reading School**



## Context of the School

St. Helen's Primary School is a Roman Catholic primary situated in the residential area of Bishopbriggs within East Dunbartonshire Council and the Archdiocese of Glasgow. The school serves a catchment area mainly from the south of Bishopbriggs and Auchinairn. However, it also attracts a number of placing requests both internal and external.

The school is set in the grounds of the original Cleddens Estate and has extensive grass areas and mature trees-ideal for outdoor learning activities. Built in 1970, it has: 14 classrooms; a multi-purpose hall used for assemblies, Physical Education, dining and meetings; a small lunch hall, a small pupil relaxation room, a Nurture room (The Ivy) - established in August 2021, a designated ICT room and a number of open areas throughout the school providing additional learning spaces. The school also has a large playground, a soft playground in the lower school area, an Eco garden, a seated outdoor classroom/social space- provided by Parent Association fundraising - and a full-sized, all-weather sports pitch. We are innovative in our use of internal and external space to ensure equitable access for learning and recreation activities for all children.

St Helen's PS has a clear and shared vision which underpins and permeates all we do: **St. Helen's Primary School is a Community of Faith, Love and Learning where everyone is respected and encouraged to reach their full potential.** We promote our school's vision and values, based on the Gospel values, - Faith, Love, Learn and Community- through our policies and practice and we share and celebrate these values in action through our Values Champions at Pastoral Assemblies.

The school currently has a roll of 327 pupils. The school is staffed with 17.93 full time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff which includes the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising of the Head Teacher, 2 Depute Head Teachers and 1 Principal Teacher, 0.4 FTE allocated to education support teaching, and 1 Nurture Teacher (NT) staffing the Nurture Room. We also have a specialist music teacher for one day per week. This session we used a portion of our Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation to fund more time for education support teaching within the school. The school is further supported by support staff consisting of 2.4 FTE Clerical staff, 3 Classroom Assistants, 4 Additional Support for Learning Assistants and 1 Family Learning Assistant (FLA) who supports the Nurture Room while also developing family learning activities across the school, 1 Building Manager, 4 Catering staff and 4 Cleaning staff.

Our catchment area consists of a mix of owner occupied, privately rented and local authority housing. The free meals entitlement (FME) - is 8.3% and 6.1% of our children live in areas identified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as Quintile 1. This session we received £38,880 from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to reduce the poverty related attainment gap.

Children enter into St Helen's from a range of local authority and private partnership Early Years Centres and normally transfer after P7 to Turnbull High School. As part of the Turnbull Cluster, there are very effective transition arrangements in place ensuring continuity in our children's education.

St Helen's PS is part of St. Dominic's Roman Catholic Parish which plays an important role in the life of the school. The Parish Priest, who is our school chaplain, is a regular visitor to the school supporting our faith life, sacramental preparation and Religious Education Roman Catholic (RERC) curriculum.

The school also enjoys an excellent relationship with our parents and carers. St Helen's has a vibrant Parent Association who work tirelessly to support the work and life of the school providing funds, through community fundraising activities, to enhance the children's school experience by subsidising school trips, providing funds to improve the indoor and outdoor environment and providing social events for our community. We also have a very active and supportive Parent

Council whom we consult with throughout the session identifying our school's priorities and reviewing our progress.

Our Standards and Quality report has been created in consultation with all stakeholders and tells the story of our school's performance, successes and achievements during the current session as well as summarising our next steps in improvement for session 2025-26.

### Progress in School Improvement Plan (SIP) priorities

School priority 1: To improve attainment and achievement for all through improved curricular planning and programmes in literacy- Reading and Writing		
<p>NIF Priority Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children</p> <p>NIF Driver curriculum and assessment school improvement parent / carer involvement and engagement</p>	<p>HGIOS?4 QIs</p> <p>QI 2.2 Curriculum</p> <p>QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching &amp; Assessment</p> <p>QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</p>	
<p>Progress and Impact:</p> <p>In developing this priority, we have continued to see a positive impact on our learner's attainment, enthusiasm, engagement and achievement in literacy, in particular in spelling, phonics, reading and writing.</p> <p>Pupil Voice questionnaires confirmed that most learners felt very confident/confident when reading and that the majority of learners felt their comprehension and reading strategy skills had improved. Almost all learners felt they had become better and more fluent readers. Attainment data in reading confirmed that almost all learners are achieving in reading at P1 and P7 and that most learners are achieving at P4.</p> <p>Staff completed pre and post development questionnaires on reading. All staff agreed that active reading strategies developed the learner's skills effectively, provided coherence, consistency and clear progression and almost all staff felt extremely/very confident teaching reading skills. SLT observations, class visits and learning, teaching and tracking meetings confirmed that the extensive training for staff, the greater level of consistency and continuity in learning and teaching and almost all learners' attaining in literacy at key stages evidence the success of this improvement priority.</p> <p>We have achieved the Scottish Book Trust Reading Accreditation at silver level. Opportunities to promote our pupils' voice and pupils' leadership continue to greatly increase through the school's reading committee, led by our Literacy Champion. The reading committee has again successfully implemented a wide range of new school actions whilst embedding previous strategies to increase reading for enjoyment. These included improving the class and school environment, planning whole school events that promote reading for enjoyment, author visits at all stages, reading buddies at almost all stages, library visits for most classes, lunchtime reading clubs, raising the profile of reading for enjoyment with staff, pupils, families and the community. Attitudinal surveys on reading for enjoyment were sent out to pupils, staff and parents/carers. These surveys, alongside regular dialogue with staff, learning conversations with pupils and observations have enabled us to monitor learners' interests, engagement and confidence and have confirmed greater awareness and participation in reading for enjoyment. The data gathered enabled us to be more responsive to how the pupils' best enjoy reading for pleasure and incorporate these activities into our whole school practices. We are now working towards gold level reading school accreditation.</p> <p>This session we also extended our active literacy approach by beginning to develop a consistent and coherent approach to teaching and learning in writing across the school. Interim learner and staff questionnaires have indicated that learners are developing their writing skills in a coherent</p>		

and consistent way and that all learners feel their writing skills have improved with most learners enjoying their writing experiences. Almost all staff feel very confident/confident in teaching these new approaches to writing. At this mid stage of the improvement priority most learners are already attaining in writing in P1, 4 and 7.

#### Next Steps:

- Continue to develop and embed consistent, coherent and progressive teaching and learning in writing to improve writing attainment further
- Achieve Gold Reading School accreditation
- Review school programme and develop active literacy approaches to teaching and learning in listening and talking.

### **School priority 2: To improve attainment, achievement and wellbeing for all through Learning and Teaching-Play and Pupil Enquiry Based Learning (PEBL) pedagogy**

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

Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children

Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

NIF Driver school improvement  
teacher professionalism  
school leadership

HGIOS?4 QIs

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change

QI 2.3 Learning, Teaching & Assessment

#### Progress and Impact:

The school's PEBL approach dovetails and builds on the play based learning approach being implemented in P1-3. Indications are that this has been a successful development with a positive impact on learners and their engagement in learning.

During this session we aimed to build upon the success of the PEBL pilot we undertook last session. The aim was to move away from a traditional adult led teaching and learning experience to a pupil led enquiry based approach which promotes skills development of learners in 5 key areas: Communication, Social, Research, Thinking and Self-Management skills. All learners have engaged in PEBL through 3 central ideas linked to Social Subjects. The development group created 'St Helen's Enquiry Cycle' which ensured consistency of approach and support for learners. The majority of staff feel that learners engaged well in the PEBL approach. Class teacher self-evaluation indicates that learners across P4-P7 stages have developed their enquiry skills, evidenced through progress from engaging in either 'Structured or Controlled' enquiries only during planning block 1 to five enquiries being 'Guided' and one class engaging in 'Free' enquiry by block 3. Learner survey indicated that almost all learners enjoy the PEBL approach and most learners prefer it to the more traditional teacher led approach. A parent presentation to inform parents of principles and benefits of the PEBL approach was also created. All staff conducted sharing learning events focussed on the PEBL approach in term 3 and 4 and parental feedback was very positive with most parents affirming their support for this approach to learning. Further support materials 'Strive for 25' were created to promote learner and staff reflection on key skills development and feedback indicated that this was a very useful tool for learners in P4-7 with staff reporting notable improvement in Communication, Social and Research skills and feeling confident in incorporating reporting on progress in these skills in the end of year report to parents.

Play pedagogy has been further developed as observation records have been introduced to effectively track pupil engagement, achievement, and attainment through play across P1–3. Evidence from these staff observations show learners' achievement through increased independence and confidence in learning through play. Staff observations indicate that almost all children are now engaging in more purposeful learning experiences, they take ownership of their own progress by managing individual targets and they complete tasks to a high standard. The consistent use of a planning framework across P1 to P3—which includes teacher-led, teacher-initiated, and child-led opportunities—ensures continuity and progression. SLT have observed during learning visits that almost all children are visibly more engaged, demonstrate responsibility in their environment, and contribute meaningfully to the planning process through the use of class 'wish lists' to amplify pupil voice ensuring that children's ideas and preferences directly shape the learning experiences. This consistent planning framework has also strengthened collaboration among staff and all staff confirm it has led to more effective professional dialogue. There has also been a notable improvement in wellbeing as a result of play as children are encouraged to develop their social, creative and discovery skills. Almost all children in Primary 1, 2 and 3 have reported in the Health & Wellbeing surveys carried out within the school that they are happy and learning at school. Furthermore parental engagement has increased through regular updates shared by staff on the school's digital platform-SeeSaw, where photographs and examples of learning are shared enabling families to see and understand the value of play in different contexts and fostering a stronger home-school connection.

**Next Steps:**

- Continue to embed PEBL approaches across Social Subjects
- Engage in PEBL approaches in Science
- Develop reporting to parents format to include progress in the 5 key skills areas
- Enhance the breadth and depth of play experiences for P1-3 through further developing outdoor play provision

**School priority 3: Improvement in wellbeing and equity through engagement in the Catholic Church Global compact for Education, the implementation of the CIRCLE framework and Keeping the Promise.**

<p>NIF Priority      Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre</p> <p>Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing</p> <p>Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children</p> <p>NIF Driver      school improvement school leadership teacher professionalism</p>	<p>HGIOS?4 QIs</p> <p>QI 1.3 Leadership of Change</p> <p>QI 3.1 Wellbeing, equality &amp; inclusion</p>
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**Progress and Impact:**

St Helen's had already engaged with the CIRCLE framework last session to increase our staff and pupil understanding of inclusion and additional needs. This session EDC adopted it as whole authority initiative and additional training has extended staff understanding and confidence while ensuring a consistent approach for learners across the school and EDC.

We focussed on the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS) self-evaluation tool enabling all staff to identify key areas for improvement within their own class and a common area for change across the school. This was supported by the results from the pupil versions of CICS which almost all children completed and a Calm Corner to support self-regulation was created in all classrooms

with consistent resources and practice. Early indications are that this has been a welcomed addition to classrooms with a range of children accessing the class Calm Corner for a range of reasons.

This session we extended our focus on Gospel values and our journey as a Rights Respecting School through engaging with Pope Francis' Global Compact. We worked on 3 of the 7 core commitments: to make the human persons centre; to listen to the voices of children and to safeguard our common home. The main way we did this was through our school committees as all children lead aspects of the school life and work through a committee of their choice. Each committee created an action plan, implemented it and shared/promoted their journey and actions through Pastoral Assemblies, posters and newsletters. All teaching staff also reflected on their role as Catholic Teachers through engaging with the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland and promoting Catholic Social Teaching in their roles as teachers and facilitators of the school committees. In our school community the committees raised awareness of respect for the dignity of every person, children's right to an education, the cost of the school day and caring for our school environment.

Next Steps:

- Continue use of CICS and maintain Calm Corners
- Implementation of CIRCLE Inclusive Partnership (Year 2- Participation Scale)
- Continue to engage with the commitments of the Global Compact as part of our journey as a Rights Respecting school
- Focus on aspect of RERC – Celebrating and Worshipping as part of the Holy Year EDC Catholic Schools activities.

## Progress in National Improvement Framework (NIF) priorities

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

Our school's vision, values and aims and Catholic social teaching guides our approach and practice in promoting respectful and inclusive relationships which honour the life, dignity and voice of each person. This is a crucially important focus for our whole school community as we promote our Catholic mission as seen in the Charter for Catholic Schools while aligning Nurturing Principles and the Rights of the Child. Our school curriculum has both explicit and implicit work around rights-based learning. Our school committees have ensured that every child has a voice in our school and community and an opportunity to promote and enjoy their rights in action. We have 2 pupils attending the EDC Pupil Forum- 'My Voice My Choice' who represent the views of our school community in this wider forum. We are a registered Rights Respecting School and are at the start of our journey to accreditation. Our school is also a Pope Francis 'Laudato Si' school as we aim to integrate teaching about environmental issues, promoting sustainable practices, and encouraging our children to become "Stewards of Creation". Committing to Pope Francis' Laudato Si and Global Compact 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. We are also continuing to promote the rights of Looked After children by engaging in The Promise with staff and parents.

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

This session we have dedicated the majority of our PEF (Pupil Equity Funding) to supplementing our support for learning teaching staff to support children who have been experiencing a potential poverty related attainment gap. Class Teachers and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have met regularly to review and analyse all assessment data-summative and formative, to identify where gaps in learning may have occurred in literacy and numeracy. We have then implemented planned, targeted supports where the class teacher, as the educator best placed to address these gaps has been the key individual



providing this intervention. Furthermore, we have implemented a Reading Recovery programme at Primary 2 and most of the children are now attaining appropriately in reading and talking & listening. We have seen a notable increase in attainment of children in Quntile 1. Almost all children in Primary 4 and all children in Primary 7 have attained in literacy and numeracy this session.

Furthermore, we are cognisant of the potential financial burden school activities can place on our families taking great care to minimise the cost of the school day. We have a uniform exchange/ supply available all year round, we surveyed parents on acceptable costs and do not exceed this agreed amount in any activity, school trips are subsidised by the PA funds and we have access to funds provided by our parish St Vincent de Paul society to support members of our community in financial need.

- **Improvement in achievement, particularly in literacy and numeracy;**

Attainment data indicates that this session we are maintaining high levels of attainment with almost all or most children attaining at all key stages in - reading, writing, talking & listening and numeracy & mathematics. Furthermore, a group of learners –between 10-15% - at all key stages are exceeding these targets this session. However, in comparing historical data which allows us to track Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Level (ACEL) attainment data for the same cohort of learners from P1 to P4 and P4 to P7, this data indicates that P4 are sustaining attainment levels from P1 and at P7 we have increased attainment from the previous levels by between 2.5% and 11.6%. In addition, ACEL data in Numeracy, Reading, Writing and Listening and Talking at P1, 4 and 7 has remained high and is above EDC average and well above national averages.

- **Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing;**

Our approach to promoting positive relationships and behaviour to improve the children's wellbeing and the whole community's understanding of the importance of this area, has had a positive impact on our children as almost all children are able to self-regulate and display respectful relationships with others. Aligned with our Nurture class and the embedding of nurturing principles within the school, the support provided to families by the SLT, school staff and the Family Learning Assistant, the raised awareness of the CIRCLE framework in meeting learners' needs and trauma informed practice we have been able to support our children more fully. The SLT and class teachers have met regularly at learning, teaching and tracking meetings and at Pupil Support Group (PSG) meetings to discuss and ensure that programmes and planned interventions are in place to support our most vulnerable children and families. Health and Wellbeing (H&W) surveys have been carried out with all pupils twice per session to gather information, monitor and allow staff to respond and support children's personally identified areas of need or concern. Most children report positively on their own health and wellbeing in the H&W surveys with high scores overall.

The children benefit from opportunity for healthy physical activities in school- there is 2 hours of PE provided each week as part of the school curriculum and a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs such as netball, football, cross country, athletics, dance, mini-fit and games provided by staff and Active –Schools volunteers which are very well attended by pupils.

Moreover, our children's wellbeing has also benefitted greatly from opportunities for leadership and enthusiastic engagement through our school committees in which every pupil is a member. Through these committees they have a voice and an opportunity to lead an area of the life and work of the school impacting positively on the decision making processes within the school.

## 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	almost all	most	almost all	almost all
First level by end of P4	most	most	almost all	most
Second level by end of P7	almost all	most	almost all	almost all

This session our children have had some notable achievements. Almost all children in Primary 7 have achieved the Pope Francis Faith Award through their efforts to put their faith into action within the school, home and parish. Almost all of our children in Primary 3, 4 and 7 received the Sacraments of First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation. This session the school community donated a large amount of food to the Bishopbriggs Foodbank to support local families at Christmas. Furthermore, as part of God's family and as Global Citizens we have supported others by raising over £1,200 through our charitable fundraising to support Missio, St Nicolas Care Fund and St Vincent De Paul Society. All of our Primary 4 children carried out successful Tenner Tycoon enterprise activities raising further funds for our school charities.

Most children in P7 achieved their Bikeability award. Almost all children in Primary 7 attended Auchengillan Outdoor Centre for a three-day experience and a few attended on a daily basis. All children P1-6, attended an educational day trip linked to an aspect of their learning which was subsidised by our PA funds to ensure there were no financial barriers to attending. Some of our P7 and P6 children attended sporting festivals and competitions in athletics, football and netball winning medals for themselves and team trophies on 6 occasions. A group of P7 pupils represented the school at local Dance Festivals and a small group of P7 pupils also represented the school at the EDC Christmas Concert in the Royal Concert Hall. A number of our children performed in the choir at the Bishopbriggs Community Council 'Christmas Lights Switch On', Children in Primary 1-4 presented a Nativity and Christmas Concert for our school community, local senior citizens and nurseries. Pupil Councillors from P6 and P7 represented St Helen's at the EDC Pupil Forum and achieved Dynamic Youth Awards. The school achieved Silver Level accreditation as a Reading School.

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

The majority of our Pupil Equity Funding for session 2024-25 of £38,800 has been dedicated to providing additional teaching time to supplement the support for learning teacher team within the school. Following consultation with stakeholders -Parent Council representing our parent forum, Pupil Council and staff, it was agreed that Pupil Equity Funding would mainly be used to employ an additional teacher (0.4 FTE) to support our most vulnerable pupils through planned, targeted interventions in Literacy and Numeracy as well as funding further training for one teacher and resources for Reading Recovery- a bespoke reading intervention programme for learners in Primary 2.

This has allowed us to provide blocks of targeted support, mostly in literacy but also in numeracy at Primary 7, at every area of the school- lower, middle and upper- throughout the whole session. Our approach of allocating the support teacher to work directly with the class teacher within the class, allowing the class teacher to focus on the individual/groups requiring targeted intervention support has impacted positively. Furthermore, ongoing assessment data has indicated that of the children targeted who did not attain early or first level as expected last session, the majority have now attained it within this session. Furthermore, when the targeted block of intervention was completed the class teacher has been able to sustain and maintain the child's progress with the



class. The Reading Recovery programme implemented at Primary 2 has also had a positive impact for the majority of learners who are now attaining appropriately in reading and listening & talking while a few are now attaining in writing. We have also used a portion of our PEF to fund 20 laptops for P5-7 and 18 I-pads for P1-4 for assistive technology use to support learners, such as those with dyslexia, who require scaffolding or specific digital supports for 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	Very good	Very good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good	Good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equity and inclusion	Very good	Very good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good	Good

Education Scotland inspected the school in Feb 2020 and indicated that we were good in the QI areas 2.3 and 3.2. However, they also indicated that we were close to very good in both of these areas. In the time since that inspection we have worked on the consistency that Education Scotland felt we required to achieve very good and school self-evaluation now evaluates the school as very good in 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment while continuing to work towards very good in 3.2.Raising attainment and achievement.

### Summary of School Improvement priorities for Session 2025/26

- 1.Literacy- Writing, Talking and Listening
- 2.Enquiry Based Learning through Science
- 3.H&W/RERC- The Circle year 2, RERC- Celebrating and Worshipping

### What is our capacity for continuous improvement?

The positive ethos, strong relationships and shared vision on how to move the school forward are strong indicators for continued capacity to improve, aligned to our partnership with parents and stakeholders, focus on data informed approaches to learning, teaching and assessment, school self- evaluation and quality assurance processes during session 2024-25. The development and improvement work carried out this session maintains the school's capacity to promote attainment and achievement for all our learners and to continue to address the gap between the most and least disadvantaged children. The improvement plans for next session aligned with the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and EDC support will facilitate this greatly. Furthermore, our professional learning programme will support all staff, especially new teachers, to maintain the high standards of teaching in the school and the stimulating learning ethos which depicts St Helen's PS.