

Summarised inspection findings

Carmyllie Primary School

Angus Council

14 November 2023

Key contextual information

Carmyllie Primary School is a small, rural school situated in the village of Redford. The school has a large, rural catchment area with a number of children travelling to school by bus. At the time of the inspection, the school roll of 19 children were being taught across two multi-composite classes. Five children attend the early learning and childcare setting. Children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 3. Attendance is above the national average. The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

The headteacher has been in post since August 2019. She has overall leadership responsibility for both Carmyllie Primary School and Arbirlot Primary School. The school has experienced considerable changes to the teaching staff and nursery team over the last four years.

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:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- The headteacher and all staff at Carmyllie Primary School ensure that the school is a nurturing and caring place, where all children feel safe, respected and trusted. Relationships across the school are very supportive and reflect the school's values, and children's rights. Children interact respectfully with their peers, adults and visitors to the school. The school's positive ethos is supporting children's engagement in learning.
- Teachers organise learning environments very well. They consult children about the layout of the classroom and the resources available. Children are proud of their input and have a strong sense of ownership of their learning environment. Children understand the purpose of their class charter and can explain the importance of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) within the context of their school. Staff have introduced a systematic use of symbols across the school to make the curriculum and signage around the school accessible to all children.
- Almost all children are eager and active participants in their learning. They demonstrate confidence and resilience and are highly motivated to learn. Children have individual targets that provide them with clear direction on how they can improve their own work. They enjoy helping to maintain personal learning folios that contain examples of their best work and demonstrate the breadth of their learning. Staff use classroom displays effectively, highlighting helpful strategies to support children in their current learning. Almost all children explain confidently their thinking and the strategies they use. Teachers should, as planned, review the school's skills progression framework. This should support children to recognise the key skills they are developing through learning activities.
- Almost all learners' experiences are appropriately challenging, enjoyable and well matched to their needs and interests. Children have an appropriate balance of well-planned opportunities

to work individually, in pairs and as a group throughout the day. Teachers support children well to understand the relevance and purpose of their learning and wider school experiences. Staff should continue to support children to develop independent learning skills. Children should have increased opportunities to take responsibility for and lead their own learning.

- Overall, the quality of teaching is very good. All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. They use questioning well to check for understanding and to extend and deepen children's learning. Teachers share learning intentions and success criteria effectively which helps children know what they need to do to be successful in that lesson. Where success criteria are co-created with children, this helps them to take increased ownership of their learning. Teachers use plenary sessions successfully with children to demonstrate learning and celebrate successes. Children enjoy regular opportunities to peer and self-assess their work which they find helpful. Staff provide supportive and encouraging verbal and written feedback on children's learning. These comments support children with their next steps in learning.
- The headteacher and staff have developed a 'Learning Toolkit' to support consistent high-quality practice across the school. All staff value feedback and guidance about how to improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching approaches. They speak very positively about the quality and relevance of professional learning opportunities. They recognise the value of working with staff out with their own school. They are empowered and encouraged to engage further with colleagues across their cluster to develop their practice and improve outcomes for all children.
- Teachers use very effective approaches to integrate digital technologies in learning and teaching. They use interactive whiteboards regularly to enhance teaching. Children make very good use of technology to support their learning. Older children use devices and technologies confidently and independently, for example to type their stories and carry out research. All children use matrix codes to access a range of relevant online games and apps to extend and consolidate their learning. Teachers and children use a digital platform effectively to share children's learning with their parents.
- Staff recognise the benefits of playful pedagogy, especially for younger children. Teachers are working with children to create interesting learning spaces both inside and outdoors which children access regularly. The headteacher and staff should continue to engage with national guidance and professional learning to support the further development of play. This should help teachers plan play experiences that allow all children to deepen and extend their learning, appropriate to their stage of development and learning needs.
- The headteacher and teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment approaches including data from Scottish National Standardised Assessments and other standardised assessments. They use the assessment information well to make professional judgements of children's progress and attainment and to plan future learning. Staff also use assessment information to identify accurately children who may require additional support.
- The headteacher has established very effective processes for moderation at school level and within Arbroath High School associated schools' group. Teachers meet and discuss standards and expectations across literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. This is supporting teachers to develop a clearer understanding and shared expectations of children's progress and achievement within Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). As planned, teachers should continue to engage in regular moderation activities with other schools to develop further their understanding of expected levels in other areas of the curriculum.

- Teachers use progression pathways and frameworks well for all areas of the curriculum to plan over different timescales. This ensures a coherent and progressive approach to teaching across the school. They take real-life global and community issues into account where possible. This is helping children to understand their local community and the world in which they live. Teachers successfully involve children in the planning processes. Children identify what and how they would like to learn across different curricular areas.
- The headteacher meets with class teachers for pupil progress and tracking meetings three times a year. They discuss the progress of individual children in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing and make evidence-based predictions of children's projected levels of attainment. Teachers are confident in using their professional judgement to assess children's progress. They use a range of appropriate assessments to support their judgements.
- Staff who provide additional support within the school, implement interventions in literacy and numeracy effectively. This results in improved progress for children. They maintain records which demonstrate the progress individuals are making against their own targets in literacy and numeracy.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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:

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

Attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels. This is because of the very small numbers of children at each stage.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Attainment data provided by the school shows that for session 2022-2023, levels of attainment across the school were very good. Almost all children achieve expected levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children exceed national expectations in both literacy and numeracy. For children who require some extra support in their learning, the school's reliable evidence demonstrates that they are attaining well for their individual levels of need.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, almost all children make very good progress in literacy and English from prior levels of attainment.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children listen well to teacher input and follow instructions. They confidently share their thoughts and opinions appropriate to their age and stage. A few children across the school require reminders not to interrupt others and to take turns when speaking in large groups. Children are developing an understanding of the skills required for effective listening and talking, such as eye contact and body language. They would benefit from continuing to practise techniques to engage listeners in larger audiences.

Reading

- Almost all children enjoy reading, and approaches to reading across the school foster a love of reading. They make personal choices about what they like to read and can explain their reasons why. Younger children are developing their knowledge of sounds and are beginning to blend with increasing confidence. Older children, as appropriate to their age and stage, read well with fluency and expression. They use their reading skills well to research information independently on a range of digital platforms. Older children will benefit from continuing to develop skills in creating and answering inferential questions.

Writing

- Staff identified writing as a whole school area for improvement. They are applying professional learning well to develop further the teaching of writing. Across all stages, children's writing shows clear signs of improvement and overall, almost all children are making very good progress. Children have regular opportunities to write across a range of genres. This is often

stimulated by the local environment, learning across the curriculum and real-life events. Younger children use a capital letter and a full stop in at least one sentence. They make an attempt to spell familiar words correctly. Older children use notes and other sources to develop their thinking and create new texts. They organise their writing in a logical order with increasing confidence. Children would benefit from further support to confidently use a range of language techniques to engage the reader, for example, simile, metaphor and onomatopoeia.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children learn to read, write and order numbers appropriate to their age and stage. They develop mental agility in carrying out simple calculations which they build on with increasing confidence. Older children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers with increasing difficulty. They are less confident in rounding numbers to the nearest 1000, 10 000 and 100 000.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children can recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They can identify, describe, and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. Older children can identify a range of angles. They can use the eight compass points and angles to describe, follow and record directions. They particularly enjoy learning these skills outdoors.

Information handling

- Children sort and display data in a few different ways. They know how to collect information using tally marks and can display their data in graphs and charts. They would benefit from opportunities to gather and present data, using their digital skills to choose the most appropriate approaches to display the information.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher is aware that, year on year, attainment figures are variable due to changes in the school roll and the very small numbers of children at each stage. She maintains a detailed overview of the progress of individual children in literacy and numeracy. Staff use this information well to identify and address any gaps or potential barriers to learning. The headteacher can evidence that when children face barriers to learning, they make good progress in their targeted areas of support and meet nationally expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher should consider how this approach could be developed further to capture children's progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff value children's achievements both in and outside of school. They are celebrated at assemblies, displayed throughout the school and shared with parents through digital platforms. Children enjoy the celebration of their personal achievements. It supports their sense of progress and self-esteem. Working together as a school community, children have achieved recognition through national awards, in areas including promoting a positive reading culture, sport and developing children's rights. Teachers support children well to embrace challenge and ensure they have opportunities to take part in local and national competitions, such as Angus Potato Project and Scottish country dancing festivals. As a result, children's skills and achievements are enhanced.

- Children have a range of opportunities to achieve through the curriculum and their involvement in the life of the school. Children demonstrate their creativity and enterprising skills by organising and leading whole school events, such as the Community Cafe. All children are members of a pupil leadership group including Reading Leaders and Rights Respecting Leaders. Through these opportunities, children are developing important skills including leadership, decision-making and collaboration. Healthy lifestyles are promoted very well through the work with Active Schools. Staff track children's participation in school clubs and wider activities. This allows them to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out. As planned, staff should further develop systems to track children's achievement to include the skills they are developing. This will help to ensure that children's skills are developed progressively. It will also support children to identify their strengths, attributes and the contributions they make as respectful, responsible, global citizens.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a very good understanding of the socio-economic background of all children. They have a shared aim to ensure that the children of Carmyllie should have the same opportunities as learners from other schools. The headteacher and staff work in partnership with a variety of partners to provide children with as many opportunities as possible to be involved in a wide range of activities and projects. This includes participating in the Scottish Opera project, a cluster ceilidh and Bikeability road safety programme. The headteacher has arrangements in place to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for achievement. Staff make very effective use of shared equipment and arrangements for transport to ensure all children are included.
- The headteacher uses PEF effectively to improve outcomes for children. Funding is discussed as a community and is used for additional staffing hours and to purchase resources. This supports children's learning both universally and on a targeted basis. The headteacher is aware of the need to evidence the impact of these funded interventions on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. She should continue to monitor carefully the progress of children receiving targeted support for this purpose.

Other relevant evidence

- Children experience a broad and balanced curriculum. They learn French across the school, building appropriately on prior learning to develop their listening, talking and writing skills as they progress through the school. This year, older children will also learn German. All children receive their entitlement to two hours of Physical Education (PE). Children learn through a progressive religious and moral education programme across the school. Children participate in religious observance through attending services at the local church across the school year.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on promoting a literacy rich environment and encourage reading for pleasure through a range of activities and events. Reading leaders across the school plan a range of exciting events and activities to motivate, engage and support children to have fun with books. All classes use the school library regularly, with children encouraged to select texts to read for enjoyment. Children are developing an understanding of the authors and genres they prefer, as a result.

Practice worth sharing more widely

2.3 A self-evaluation framework to support moderation processes.

This a strong example of a robust self-evaluation tool that helps practitioners to engage in moderation processes that supports them to arrive at valid and reliable decisions on learners' progress towards, and achievement of, a level.

- The headteacher worked closely with a senior leader from another school to develop the self-evaluation tool. The self-evaluation tool supports senior leaders and teachers to evaluate their understanding and approaches to moderation.
- It supports them to identify next steps to further improve the consistency of teacher's professional judgement.
- The self-evaluation tool aligns with Education Scotland's Moderation Cycle.
- It is a helpful inter-related map that other schools within the cluster, local authority and improvement collaboratives are using to develop moderation processes.

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.