

# Summarised inspection findings

Cairneyhill Primary School

Fife Council

12 September 2023

## Key contextual information

Cairneyhill Primary School and nursery class is a non-denominational school in the village of Cairneyhill in West Fife, just outside Dunfermline. It opened in 1981. Two hundred and thirty-four children currently attend Cairneyhill Primary, which is also a designated provision centre for children with additional support needs. Currently 22 children are supported in the additional support centre (ASC). There are 10 mainstream classes and two supported classes.

The headteacher has been in post since 2014. She is supported by a permanent deputy headteacher (DHT) and an acting DHT. This session, the school received £30,625 Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and this is used primarily to fund staffing to support children across the school. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles six to nine.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- Children at Cairneyhill Primary School are welcoming, eager to learn and respectful. They demonstrate the school values of fair, kind, polite and ambitious. The values underpin the school ethos and lead to a positive learning environment. Staff and children have positive relationships and school staff know children very well as individuals. This is supporting children to engage successfully in learning.
- The headteacher is well respected and knows the school community very well. Her strong, supportive leadership and effective approaches to school evaluation ensure learning and teaching is continually improving. She is ably supported by the senior leadership team. Together they have developed robust quality assurance processes which are leading to improvements in learners' experiences across the school.
- Most children engage well in learning. They are motivated to learn and talk confidently about learning experiences. All teachers share learning goals to ensure children know the purpose of learning and success criteria help children to know what they need to do to be successful. There are high expectations and aspirations for all children. In most lessons, learning is differentiated to meet the needs of most learners, allowing for challenge and support as appropriate. Teachers are beginning to plan opportunities for children to have more choice in aspects of learning. This should be extended to allow children a greater voice in planning, leading, and sharing their learning.
- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching is good. Senior leaders and teachers have together agreed an approach to learning and teaching. This is resulting in consistent approaches to class lessons across the school. However, in a minority of lessons, this is too prescriptive and is constraining creativity. A few lessons could be more engaging for children, and better linked to children's interests. Teachers should continue to work together to use a wider range of learning and teaching approaches to engage and motivate all children better.

This will help to ensure the consistency of high-quality learning and teaching across the school, rather than consistency of approach.

- Most teachers provide clear explanations and instructions which help children to complete planned activities. In a majority of lessons, the pace of learning could be brisker. Children often spend too long listening to instructions before moving onto learning tasks. Children who finish work quickly and successfully need opportunities to extend their learning within the planned curriculum area.
- Most teachers use skilled questioning to check for understanding. The majority use questioning which encourages children to explain their thinking. Teachers should continue to develop their questioning skills to better help children broaden their understanding and thinking within the areas they are learning. Across the school, most teachers provide appropriate feedback to learners which focuses on their strengths and outlines what children need to do to improve.
- Teachers working in the early years have engaged well with professional learning on play pedagogy. Children in P1 and P2/1 benefit from regular opportunities for purposeful play. Children contribute to planning these play experiences, for example, developing the vet surgery. This approach helps children to develop social skills, independence and creativity. Teachers use learning contexts effectively to extend learning from class, for example, in estimating and measuring.
- Across the school, teachers use their interactive whiteboards well to support their teaching. Teachers use digital tools well to support children who require additional support with their learning. All children would benefit from greater opportunities to use a wider range of digital technology more often within their day-to-day learning. This will help to develop and enhance their digital literacy skills.
- Senior leaders deploy all staff very well to ensure the effective provision of both universal and targeted support across all stages. Support staff effectively meet the needs of individual children across the school. In partnership with teachers, they adapt activities and tasks to ensure children are able to participate well in learning.
- Across the school, all children are involved in meaningful self and peer assessment. This is helping children understand how to be successful and identify what their next steps are in learning. Children are well-placed to take a greater role in leading their own learning.
- Teachers plan and use a range of formative and summative assessment strategies well to support learning, teaching and assessment. In most classes, teachers gather information on children's progress during lessons. They use this assessment information to plan carefully next steps for groups of learners. Teachers should now plan open-ended assessments which will enable children to demonstrate application of learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Teachers use the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) and a range of other summative and diagnostic assessment data to measure the progress of children. Teachers use this data to support their professional judgement and their understanding of national standards.
- Teachers plan effectively across the curriculum to meet the needs of different groups of children. These detailed plans support teachers to reflect on the progress that children are making. In learning experiences where children's views are included in planning, children have greater ownership and independence in learning, they are highly motivated and learning is more meaningful for them. Teachers need to revisit key learning more regularly with children to extend and deepen their learning. This should include opportunities for children to transfer

learning into other curricular areas or new and unfamiliar contexts to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

- All teachers engage in well-planned professional development linked to school improvement priorities. Teachers worked in partnership with local authority partners and the South East Improvement Collaborative to research and develop approaches to improving writing across the school. Teachers valued this collaborative working experience. They report improved confidence in researching and implementing new approaches to learning and teaching through their involvement in this work. Positive feedback from teachers, and improving writing attainment, has highlighted the benefits of this approach for individual children and in writing approaches across the school.
- Teachers track the progress and attainment of children in their class thoroughly. Teachers and senior leaders review individual children's progress at regular pace and challenge meetings. They create detailed raising attainment plans, which identify gaps in learning and plan actions to support children's progress. Teachers and senior leaders evaluate the impact of interventions regularly to ensure they are closing gaps in learning as planned.
- Senior leaders prioritise regular opportunities for teachers to work together to develop their understanding of National Benchmarks. This professional dialogue supports consistency of practice across the school. Cluster level moderation has recently restarted following the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers should continue to work with colleagues in and beyond the school to engage in moderation activities to increase their confidence in judging children's progress across the curriculum.

## 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. 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:

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

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school is very good. Almost all children at P1, P4 and P7 are achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) national standards in reading, listening and talking. Most children are achieving CfE national standards in writing and numeracy. Combined attainment in both literacy and numeracy exceeds the 2022-23 stretch targets set by the local authority.
- There are children at every stage across the school who are achieving above CfE national standards. A few children are working significantly above CfE national standards.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making good progress from their prior learning. A few children are making very good progress. Children working on individual milestones are making good progress.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, across the school, most children are making very good progress in reading, writing and listening and talking.

### Listening and talking

- Almost all children across the school talk confidently, expressing ideas and opinions readily. At early level, almost all children listen and respond appropriately to others. They should continue to develop further their skills in listening and talking through play. At first level, almost all children can select and share their ideas using appropriate vocabulary in a logical order. At second level almost all children communicate clearly, audibly and with appropriate expression in different contexts. They successfully use suitable vocabulary for purpose and audience across the curriculum.

### Reading

- Children who have achieved early level confidently share their thoughts and feelings about stories and other texts in different ways. Children use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. Children who have achieved first level read familiar texts aloud with expression and fluency. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. Almost all children explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. Children who have achieved second level read with fluency, understanding and expression using appropriate pace and tone. They can make relevant comments about structure, characterisation and setting and are clear about the features appropriate to genre. Children at first and second level should be given the opportunity to develop further their reading for enjoyment in school.

## Writing

- Across the school, almost all children write regularly for different purposes and in different contexts. At early level, most children use capital letters and full stops accurately to punctuate sentences. At first level, most children plan and organise their ideas using an appropriate format. They use relevant and interesting vocabulary as appropriate for the context. At second level, most children write in a fluent and legible way. They engage and influence the reader through vocabulary and use of language, as appropriate to the genre. They create texts successfully for a range of purposes across the curriculum. At all stages, children would benefit from having more choice about contexts for writing.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, almost all children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. Children need to revisit numeracy and mathematics concepts more often, and in a greater range of open-ended, unfamiliar contexts. This will help them to deepen their understanding and feel confident and secure in their learning.

## Number, money and measure

- Children who have achieved early level are confident counting on to 30 and back from 20. They carry out simple additional and subtraction accurately. They are less confident discussing money. Children who have achieved first level work confidently with numbers to 1000. They carry out calculations accurately and understand the value a digit has in a number. They are less confident calculating change within £10. Most children who have achieved second level work confidently with a range of numbers up to 1,000,000. They work accurately with time and money to solve problems. A few children on track to achieve second level need more practice to ensure concepts such as area, perimeter and fractions are embedded.

## Shape, position and movement

- At all stages, children demonstrate gaps in their knowledge and understanding about two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They need to explore these concepts in a range of ways to be able to use specific vocabulary appropriate to their CfE level. Children need more confidence in describing and working with angles. Children at both first and second level can describe the location of a point using simple coordinates.

## Information handling

- Across the school, children gather, present and use a range of data appropriate to their stage of development well. Children who have achieved first level describe the key features of bar graphs. They are confident using the data in bar graphs to answer questions. Children who have achieved second level discuss different ways of presenting information, including using line and scatter graphs. They ask and answer questions about the data presented.

## Attainment over time

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy has remained consistently high over a number of years. There have been dips in attainment for some individuals and cohorts of children resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a range of assessment information, senior leaders and staff work together very well to identify and address promptly specific gaps in children's learning. They plan together a range of short-term targets and clear strategies to support individual children who are not on track with their learning. Together they monitor the impact of these strategies through raising attainment plans. This is helping to ensure that children who require support with their learning make the best possible progress.
- There has been a dip in attainment in writing in recent years across the school. Working with colleagues from Fife Council, teachers have adapted their approaches to teaching writing. This is having a positive impact on raising attainment in writing across the school.



## **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Children's achievements in school and out of school are recognised and celebrated in a range of ways. For example, through weekly assemblies, and celebrating Star of the Week and Star Writer across the school. This is helping children to be proud of their work and value their contribution to school and community life.
- Staff have re-established the pupil empowerment groups. Almost all pupils from P1-7 are involved in groups which include children's rights, pupil council and sports council. Children articulate well the skills they are developing as members of these groups. Senior leaders and teachers should provide further opportunities for groups to meet regularly and share the work they are planning with the school community. This will better help children to evaluate the impact they are having.

## **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and all staff have a very strong understanding of the strengths and challenges faced by individual children across the school and their families. They place high importance on ensuring equity of success for all children and provide a range of well-considered, sensitive supports to mitigate against barriers that children and families might face.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding to enhance staffing with a focus on improving wellbeing and attainment. This enhanced staffing enables senior leaders to strategically manage the raising attainment agenda whilst also building capacity across the staff team. This has enabled staff to work directly with groups and individual children to provide targeted numeracy and literacy support, for example, using digital tools to support writing in the early years. As a result, staff can evidence that they are closing gaps in learning for individual children, including for those impacted by financial hardship.



### Context

The Additional Support Centre (ASC) consists of two classes of children who have significant additional support needs. They are placed there following local authority multi-agency assessment. There are currently 22 children across these classes. A few children are on split placements with other schools. Others spend some of their time in classes with their peers.

### QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Staff are skilled in ensuring that all children are engaged in their learning in ASC classes. Staff know children well and monitor their progress against the targets in their 'personal learning journey' (PLJ). They are attuned to the needs and behaviour of each learner and know how and when to intervene in particular situations. Overall, there are excellent relationships between staff and children in both ASC classes.
- ASC learning activities are carefully planned to meet children's needs. Children are supported in their learning on an individual or group basis. This enables them to make good progress in their learning. For example, literacy activities can be organised in groups, with children moving round three different linked activities. These activities are appropriately differentiated for each group and are led by teachers and support assistants. Staff work together extremely effectively to make very good provision for children in the ASC and help them work towards meeting their PLJ targets. Staff need to ensure that all such targets are appropriately specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed (SMART).
- Teachers take forward lessons at an appropriate pace for children and ensure they are challenging for them. Teachers' explanations are clear and their questioning is skilled. They build in frequent breaks to keep children on task and avoid them becoming fatigued. Children are becoming increasingly skilled in using digital technology. For example, they are able to select and drag items on the interactive whiteboard, and a number of them are using a specialist word-processing package on tablet computers.
- Teachers and staff in ASC classes have a range of ways in which they regularly and accurately assess the progress of children. These include observation, questioning, printed word-processed texts, photos and videos. Staff also make reference to the experiences and outcomes and the foundation milestones. They have undertaken moderation activity relating to PLJ targets with centrally based staff and further moderation is planned. Staff communicate effectively with parents about the progress of their children using text and photos. This is very much appreciated by parents, many of whom live some distance from the school.
- ASC staff track and monitor the progress of children through the achievement of targets in their PLJ and their annual end of session report. Staff use these to summarise their targets and to show how consistently they are able to achieve them. Each ASC teacher also meets with the deputy headteacher to discuss and review their planning across the curriculum, including assessment opportunities, differentiation, learning skills and group work. This helps to ensure that learning activities meet the needs of children increasingly well and that all children continue to make progress.

### QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Children in ASC classes are working at pre-early level, early level and first level. Teachers and senior leaders carefully record attainment across all areas of the curriculum. Attainment

is tracked to demonstrate that all learners are making very good individual progress. The school should continue with its plans to ensure that this process is streamlined.

- Children in ASC classes are making very good progress at their own level in literacy and numeracy. Staff plan their learning across the curriculum in a highly individualised way.
- In literacy, children in the ASC working at pre-early level are developing skills in turn-taking. They are creating simple texts with adult support, using a specialist word processing application. They are improving their vocal communication but also respond positively to the use of signing and symbols. They all appreciate story activities at their own level and enjoy using books. Literacy tasks are carried out at three levels; activity (working with text), fine motor (mark making) and gross motor (intensive interaction and play). At early level, children can make words with a consonant, a vowel and another consonant at the end (CVC words). With support, they can also use new words in texts they create. At first level, children can find and show joining words in a sentence. They can also write simple sentences using capital letters and full stops.
- In numeracy, the majority of younger children in the ASC can write and recognise numerals up to 10. They can also add and take away up to five using concrete materials and order the days of the week. They all show an interest in numbers in the classroom. They have experienced sorting, including by colour and shape. At early level, the majority of children can order numbers from 0 to 20. They can also read the time on analogue and digital clocks. At first level, children can count forward and back in twos and can read numbers up to 100. They can also share out items equally and use the language of multiplication and division.
- Children who attend the ASC are achieving in a range of ways, including experiences organised by external partners. These include music therapy, football, tennis and judo. ASC staff are working with children to develop skills in road safety and shopping. They also participate in achievement activities shared with the rest of the school, including Star of the Day and Star Writer of the Week.
- Staff are aware of the needs of children in the school and their backgrounds. The PEF has been used to benefit children who attend the ASC by increasing staffing. This is creating more time for senior staff, support assistants and teachers to work with children and help them to achieve.

## Other relevant evidence

- 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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.
- Cairneyhill Primary has a well-resourced library and class book corners. Children reported they would like more opportunities to visit the library and read for enjoyment in school.
- The school provides children with access to 2 hours of Physical Education each week.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

School staff in nursery, Additional Support Centre (ASC) and primary have engaged in high quality professional learning and research this session. They have been supported by the South East Improvement Collaborative (SEIC) and Fife Council. As a result of a dip in writing attainment in recent years, senior leaders and teachers recognised the need to review approaches to teaching writing across the school. Staff looked at how children's literacy skills could be further improved, from nursery to P7. They worked collaboratively, engaged with professional reading and undertook research projects, for example teachers used a range of strategies to support learners in class, including visuals and self and peer placemats. School staff reflected on how this work improved their confidence and led to improvements in practice. Teachers and practitioners are more reflective. They benefited from the professional dialogue and opportunities to try new evidence-based ideas. As a result of this approach, attainment in writing across the school is improving and returning to pre-pandemic levels. Senior leaders and staff are committed to using this approach in other areas of the curriculum.

The highly-effective practice in the ASC is enabling children with significant needs to develop important life skills and make very good progress in their learning. ASC staff are highly skilled practitioners who know children very well and work extremely effectively as a team. Teachers design engaging learning activities across the curriculum in a supportive environment.

## 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.