

Summarised inspection findings

Haysholm School

North Ayrshire Council

25 June 2019

Key contextual information

Haysholm School is a an all-through special school for children and young people with severe and complex needs situated in Irvine, North Ayrshire. The school roll at the time of the inspection was 25. The education authority plans to make changes to its provision for children and young people requiring additional support needs with the opening of a single new school. It is anticipated that the children and young people currently attending Haysholm School will move into a new school sometime after October 2020.

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

- Relationships between children, young people and adults across the school are very positive. The learning environment is nurturing, caring and highly supportive. All staff fully understand the unique needs of children and their families. All staff evidence their commitment to ensuring each child's and young person's rights through their sensitive and respectful interactions with children and young people. The total communication environment developed across the school supports children and young people very well to develop their independence.
- Teachers plan learning activities which are relevant and interesting. Planned learning is highly motivating and offers appropriate levels of challenge for each child and young person. Children and young people have a very good understanding of what is expected of them. The very effective use of well-established routines, structure and visual aids helps children and young people settle well into school at the beginning of each day. Learning activities are very well matched to each individual child's or young person's needs. Children and young people are able to exercise choice by choosing from a range of resources during many learning activities. Children and young people have opportunities to enhance further their learning by attending classes at local mainstream schools.
- Children and young people are highly engaged in their learning. In the few incidences where children go off-task, staff are highly skilled in re-engaging them. They do this through the use of intensive interaction or via an appropriate learning activity. Children and young people play an active part in the life of the school through participation in school shows and the pupil council, and running a school tuck shop. All children and young people experience effective learning in the wider community through a range of planned learning for sustainability. Children's and young people's personal achievements are recognised and celebrated very well through a range of school awards and certificates. Talking mats are used well to gather children's and young people's views. Outdoor learning is used effectively to support and enhance learning. The outcomes and experiences gained through outdoor learning are clearly recorded in individual children's and young people's log books.
- The school's vision to develop children's and young people's independence is evident in all planned learning. The school's vision and values inform the work of the school very effectively.

All staff have very high expectations of themselves, children and young people. They ensure all children and young people receive the right level of support they need when they require it. As a result, children and young people are developing their skills to be as independent as possible. High quality, well differentiated learning activities ensure children and young people access their learning and make very good progress. Digital technology is used very effectively to enhance children's and young people's learning. The school should continue with their plans to introduce virtual reality into learning activities. Staff explain to children and young people the purpose of their learning very well. Feedback is used to very good effect to support children and young people to know when they have done well. Staff across all stages use a wide range of relevant, active, real-life contexts to develop children's and young people's skills for life, learning and work. Staff use the school building, wider campus and local community very well to enhance children's and young people's learning experiences.

- Staff have a clear, shared understanding of the school's curriculum rationale and approaches to assessment. Assessment is integral to the planning of learning and teaching. The school contributed to the development of Education Scotland's 'milestones to support learners with complex additional support needs' pilot programme. Staff are implementing this guidance into their assessment practices with increasing confidence. The use of high quality, evaluative language has increased, better describing children's and young people's progress. Professional dialogue and participation in structured moderation activities in school is increasing the accuracy of teachers' professional judgements. Plans are in place to extend moderation activities further in partnership with another school where children have similar additional support needs. As planned, staff should continue to develop further their shared understanding of what quality assessment looks like and how this is used to inform learning.
- 'Learning journey' files include a range of assessment evidence, demonstrating progress over time. Children's and young people's progress across the four contexts for learning is captured in learning journeys well. Individual educational plans (IEPs) include very effective long-term and short-term targets. These are tracked rigorously throughout the session and are subject to a formal annual review. Parents, children and young people are integral to the planning and review process of IEPs. Their views fully inform next steps. This strong partnership working with parents and carers ensures the development of shared goals, and enables important achievements at home to be captured. Robust gathering of assessment evidence as children enter P1 provides a clear baseline against which to measure children's progress.
- As part of the school's quality assurance procedures, termly meetings between the headteacher and teachers' enables children's and young people's progress to be closely monitored. This ongoing professional dialogue enables staff to be responsive to the needs of individual children and young people. Tracking systems have been revised to monitor learners' engagement and the level of support they receive. This has resulted in the tracking of progress being more robust and has subsequently led to an increase in the level of academic challenge offered to children and young people. Bi-annual reporting to parents clearly describes specific aspects of children's and young people's progress and identifies next steps.

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 in literacy and numeracy

- Overall children and young people are making very good progress in both literacy and numeracy across all stages of the school. Data presented by the school demonstrates that almost all learners are attaining very well, taking account of their individual additional support needs. Parents and partners report very high levels of satisfaction with the school and the outcomes children and young people achieve. Inspectors have confidence in the accuracy of the attainment data and the systems in place for tracking children's and young people's progress.

Literacy and English

- Overall, most children and young people are making very good progress in achieving their literacy and communication targets. The total communication environment provided enriches learning and is enabling almost all children and young people to be more able to understand what is expected of them. The development of literacy and communication skills is embedded in all aspects of the school's work.

Reading

- Taking account of children's and young people's additional support needs, overall, progress in reading is very good. The highly effective and consistent use of visual timetables across the school is enabling almost all children and young people to develop functional literacy skills. As a result, almost all children and young people can read or recognise symbols and written word timetables.
- Almost all children and young people are developing an awareness of the relevance of texts in their life. They enjoy choosing stories and other texts to watch, read or listen to. The awareness and conventions of handling books is reinforced through regular visits to the local library. Whole school events, such as literacy week and the celebration of World Book Day, extend this further. Children and young people can anticipate or react to parts of a rhyme or story. For example, through the use of a switch to repeat lines. The use of story texts as the context for interdisciplinary learning is enabling children and young people to recognise characters and objects. They can also respond to simple questions about the plot of a story. A few children and young people can read aloud familiar text. During cookery tasks, children can follow the step-by-step recipe guide. At senior phase young people can recognise signs in the local community.

Writing

- Almost all children have made very good progress in their development of fine motor skills to support writing. Pre-writing skills are developed in motivating, relevant, sensory and functional contexts. Where appropriate, staff make creative use of technology to improve writing skills. Children and young people enjoy exploring and playing with patterns and sounds of language.

Warm-up activities help prepare children and young people for writing tasks. Inspectors observed children being actively engaged during mark-making activities using a range of media. Through the careful selection of tasks and resources, potential physical barriers to writing are overcome. A minority of children and young people are making good progress in their ability to create, write and type words to produce simple sentences in a range of contexts.

Listening and talking/communication

- Overall, almost all children and young people are making very good progress in the development of their communication skills. The provision of detailed communication planners is increasing the effectiveness of planned learning to support this progress. Staff employ a range of strategies skilfully to support communication. As a result, almost all children and young people engage very well with learning experiences and activities. Almost all children and young people are developing early language skills appropriate to their stage of development. They are able to use first words and phrases to communicate choices and express their wants and needs. A minority are able to join words and ideas together and can take part in simple conversations. A few children and young people express themselves through signing. Intensive interaction is enabling children with more complex development needs to develop fundamental communication skills and build positive relationships. At senior phase, almost all young people can respond to, and engage in, communication with another person.
- Commendably, the school's high quality approaches to developing communication skills has increased the skill and confidence of parents and the wider staff team in their use of communication strategies.

Numeracy and mathematics

- A recent focus on enriching the quality of learners' experiences in numeracy and mathematics is having a very positive impact. As a result of improved learners' experiences, almost all children and young people are making very good progress appropriate to their stage of development and additional support needs. Teachers' use a range of creative approaches to engage children and young people within real and relevant contexts to develop practical numeracy and mathematical skills. This includes creative use of digital technology, the outdoors and local community. As planned, teachers should continue to plan numeracy across the curriculum, to ensure appropriate personalised pathways and breadth of experience for all learners across the BGE.
- Children and young people working within pre-early level foundation milestones show an understanding of a sequence of activities. Almost all take responsibility for putting up their own visual timetables on arrival to school in the morning. A few children can order their timetable symbols correctly without an exemplar and most are able to identify morning and afternoon. Almost all children are learning to make choices using symbols and pictures. A multi-sensory approach is helping children experience the colours, temperatures and smells associated with the different seasons.
- Almost all children and young people working within pre-early level recognise familiar numbers and can order numbers up to 10, with a few able to do this beyond 20. They understand the sequence of 1, 2, 3 to lead into or out of an activity. Almost all can identify items by size or amount and have an understanding of simple positional language. Children and young people working within early level can measure familiar items with non-standard units and have an understanding of basic two-dimensional shapes. They enjoy collecting and matching objects, such as leaves and berries, from the school playground.

- Children and young people across all stages of the school are developing their awareness and understanding of money. The close proximity of a range of shops is enabling regular opportunities for them to learn about the use of money. Children and young people are able to make choices and, with support, can compile shopping lists. They are developing an understanding of exchanging money. Most children and young people are making very good progress in being able to identify the days of the week, the months of the year and the seasonal weather. A few can use calendars effectively. Children and young people are also developing a good understanding of directional language through fitness and dance routines, and almost all can follow sequences when trampolining.

Attainment over time

- The school has very effectively supported children and young people across all stages of the school to make very good progress in their attainment over the past six years. Children and young people are clearly developing important communication and independence skills, and their attendance and engagement in learning is very good. Over the course of the past six years, there has been a significant increase in the number and range of National Qualifications unit awards which young people achieve before they leave school. This includes a very good variety of National 1 unit awards including, for example, literacy, mathematics, personal development, information technology, food preparation and creative arts. Older children who experience the world of work are attaining a National 2 unit award in employability skills.
- Very effective systems are in place to check the progress of learners over time. As a result, the school has strong evidence that shows all children and young people are making very good progress in their learning. Close monitoring of targets in IEPs provides clear evidence of children and young people making very good progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Evidence from learning journeys and review meetings demonstrates that children and young people are successfully developing skills to be as functionally independent as possible.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- At all stages, staff provide a range of rich learning activities to promote skills for learning, life and work. Children and young people, with appropriate support, are experiencing success, developing confidence, and taking on responsibility. They enjoy taking part in a variety of physical activities and trips in the community. For example, all children and young people develop their motor skills and improve their confidence through participating in very good learning experiences such as trampolining. The school's partnership with the Three Towns Growers supports children and young people in the BGE to experience the world of work. All young people in the senior phase participate successfully in work placements. They are also developing responsibility through, for example, delivering mail and showing visitors around the school. Led by children's and young people's dedication to sustainability, the school has successfully renewed its eco-school green flag for the fifth time. Children's and young people's understanding of their rights is a very strong feature at Haysholm, and the school has achieved a Rights Respecting Schools bronze award. Children and young people at all stages contribute regularly to local and national charities. As a result, they are developing their citizenship skills and are contributing to the local and wider community as global citizens.
- Commendably, achievements are accredited in a wide range of nationally recognised awards. Learners' achievements, both in and out of school, are celebrated regularly in a range of ways. This includes weekly class star awards, termly certificates and the headteacher's special awards. Achievements of staff and parents are also acknowledged and celebrated. Children and young people respond very positively to the genuine celebration of their achievements at weekly assemblies, on noticeboards, through social media and at individual review meetings.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the complex additional support needs and socio-economic background of their learners. They work closely with parents and partners to provide very effective support, tailored to the needs of each individual. Pupil Equity Funding has been targeted at improving communication and wellbeing strategies. A significant aspect of this has been the development of the school's communication hub which is clearly having a positive impact for children and young people, staff and parents. Children, young people and their families are now more able to communicate effectively with each other. This supports children and young people to experience a consistent model of communication between school and home. The school should more effectively track and monitor which families access this support to ensure that those most affected by deprivation do not miss out.
- Staff work closely with parents and partners to support young people leaving school to move onto positive post-school destinations. As planned, senior leaders should track these destinations and continue to strengthen and build upon existing partnership links..

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – wellbeing

- Improving children's and young people's wellbeing lies at the heart of the work of the school. This commitment is reflected in the school's vision and is evident in everything the school does. All staff are highly skilled in establishing very positive relationships with children and young people, their parents and partners of the school. The school has extended training in communication approaches to include parents and partners, such as transport escorts and drivers. There is a strong sense of community across the school based on shared values and high expectations. A few parents, whom inspectors spoke to, compared the support the staff in the school provide to that of an extended family. As a result of support from staff, families are now able to communicate more effectively with their child or young person. They can now access a wider range of community facilities which their child or young person previously found challenging. All staff, partners and parents have a shared understanding of the principles of Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC). All staff model positive interactions very well and this supports children and young people to know they are valued and cared for. Staff's very effective use of de-escalation strategies supports children and young people when they are distressed and helps them re-engage quickly with their learning.
- Children's rights are evident across the school and staff ensure these are protected at all times. Children's rights are promoted throughout the school and at review meetings. This ensures children and young people are put at the centre of planning and are treated with very high levels of dignity and respect. The respectful learning environment supports children and young people to feel safe and secure. As a result, children are calm and treat each other with courtesy and respect. The wellbeing indicators are used effectively as a tool to review children's and young people's wellbeing and to highlight any concerns staff may have. Children's and young people's views are sought at planning and review meetings. This supports children and young people to know they are listened to and are involved in decisions regarding their future.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The school's very strong practice in developing children's and young people's communication skills and independence.

Staff have commendably developed a range of approaches to ensure children and young people are supported and challenged effectively. This helps children and young people to undertake as many tasks as possible with only the minimum necessary level of support. As a result, children and young people are learning to do a number of things for themselves which their parents did not think possible. Staff's very high expectations of what children and young people can do is tempered with a realistic understanding of each child's and young person's additional support needs. This balance of support and challenge is tailored very well to each individual child and their family.

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.