Summarised inspection findings

Carrbridge Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

6 May 2025

Key contextual information

Carrbridge Primary School is a non-denominational primary school serving the village of Carrbridge, Highland and is part of the Grantown Grammar Associated Schools Group (ASG). The school campus includes a large playground and outdoor spaces, including an outdoor classroom, a trim trail, a garden area and a pond.

The headteacher has worked in the school for 20 years. She was appointed as headteacher 13 years ago. She has a teaching commitment of 0.7FTE and has the support of a principal teacher in leading the school. Most staff have worked at the school for a significant period of time.

At the time of inspection, the school roll was 76 children organised across four classes. The headteacher reports that a minority of children across the school have additional support needs. In February 2024, there were no children at P6 and P7 registered for free school meals. A minority of children live in deciles five and six and most children live in decile seven of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak

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

■ There is a calm, nurturing ethos across the school. All staff and children share mutually positive relationships. All children are well mannered, respectful and proud of their school and achievements. Children enjoy opportunities to work together in groups and pairs and do so with enthusiasm. Children across the school are very well behaved.

■ All classes have developed charters linked to children's rights. Older children can identify a few children's rights and give examples of what these mean and how they are relevant to themselves. The headteacher and staff refreshed the school values last session through consultation with stakeholders. Staff should now support the school community to review and refresh the school vision and aims. They should link these, as appropriate, to their work on children's rights. This should help to ensure that the vision, values and aims are embedded in the work of the school.

■ Children from P4-P7 have opportunities to take on leadership roles including pupil captains, digital leaders and Eco group. They do so confidently and enthusiastically. The school should now extend the range of leadership opportunities provided to children at all stages across the school.

■ Almost all children are eager to learn and participate well in their learning. Almost all teachers provide clear instructions in whole class lessons. However, too many lessons are overly teacher led and do not provide children with opportunities to lead their own learning. In a few

lessons, teachers provide activities at different levels of challenge. These activities are not yet of a high enough quality to meet the needs of all children. Teachers need to provide a wider range of learning activities which are well-matched to all children's needs. They should ensure all children experience appropriate support and challenge in their learning.

■ The headteacher and teachers need to work together to establish a shared understanding of what high quality learning and teaching looks like. This should include focussed professional learning on the key features of effective practice, underpinned by research, professional reading and highly effective practice in other schools.

■ Most teachers use predominantly closed questioning techniques to establish children's knowledge and to help children make links with prior learning. Teachers should now develop further their questioning skills. This should help them use a wider range of questioning techniques effectively to deepen children's thinking skills. In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning activities and how children will know if they have been successful. The quality and relevance of these statements is variable, and this guidance offered to children is not always clear enough for them to fully understand what is expected of them. As a result, children have difficulty identifying if they have been successful in their learning.

■ Most teachers provide verbal feedback, and a few provide written feedback to children about their work. This feedback is not yet of a consistent standard to help children know what they have done well or how to improve. As planned, staff should develop their use of high-quality feedback which helps children to make better progress in their learning.

■ Teachers are not yet implementing a play-based approach to learning at the early level. The headteacher and teachers should now engage with national practice guidance and professional learning. This can support them to review their learning environment and develop further their understanding of quality play experiences. They should consider developing approaches to children's learning across the whole of early level.

■ Children welcome opportunities to learn outdoors regularly. There is significant potential to develop children's outdoor learning skills further through the use of the school grounds and local area. Teachers at all stages should now work together to develop a progressive framework for outdoor learning to ensure children build on their existing skills and prior learning.

■ Older children use digital technology well to support their learning. Children at P6 and P7 are developing digital profiles to support them to reflect on their learning. The headteacher has worked with children across the school to support them to use a range of online tools to produce short animations, undertake coding activities and create useful interactive maps of the local area. Most teachers use interactive whiteboards successfully to support whole class lessons. Staff now need to adopt a consistent progression framework to support their planning of digital skills and technologies. This should help all children to access digital devices regularly and develop their digital skills further.

■ Staff implement an assessment calendar which outlines the standardised and summative assessments in literacy and numeracy to be administered at agreed times across the year. Teachers are at the initial stages of gathering and using robust assessment information alongside classwork, effectively. The headteacher should work with staff to develop further

approaches to gathering high quality evidence of children's progress and attainment. Staff should ensure they plan a range of high quality assessments that allow children to demonstrate breadth, depth and application of learning.

- In a few classes, children are given opportunities to self and peer assess. Teachers now need to develop all children's skill in this area. They should ensure that peer- and self-assessment activities are consistently meaningful and linked to identified steps to success. Teachers need to develop further their understanding of all aspects of formative assessment.

- All teachers plan learning over the long, medium, and short term using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Teacher's planning needs to take greater account of the different levels of challenge required to meet all children's needs effectively. Teachers use local authority progressive frameworks in literacy and numeracy to inform planned progression in learning. They should now develop progressive frameworks in all other curricular areas. This should ensure children experience progressive learning across the whole of CfE. Teachers need to ensure that assessment approaches become an integral feature of all planned learning. In doing so, they should use national Benchmarks more effectively to measure children's progress across all areas of the curriculum. This should support teachers to plan learning across the curriculum to meet children's learning needs and abilities more consistently.

- Teachers discuss children's attainment informally within school. They have engaged in moderation activities at ASG level to support their professional judgements of children's attainment in writing at second level. The headteacher should now provide further moderation activities across all areas of the curriculum. This should help to increase further teachers' confidence and reliability when making judgements against national standards and improve outcomes for children.

- The headteacher meets with teachers three times per year to discuss children's progress and the effectiveness of teachers' planning. These meetings are not yet resulting in a robust approach to planning children's learning across the curriculum. The headteacher needs to monitor planning with teachers more rigorously. She should work with teachers to develop a consistent approach to planning high quality learning across the school.

- Teachers share information about children's attainment with the headteacher during these meetings. These discussions should now have a greater focus on individual children's specific strengths and potential barriers to learning. This includes better use of data across all curriculum areas to inform planning. This should support teachers to adapt activities and tasks to meet the needs of all children and ensure appropriate pace and challenge. The headteacher needs to agree with class teachers' clear actions they will take to support children to overcome barriers to learning.

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	satisfactory

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, most children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children with additional support needs are making good progress towards their individual targets. A minority of children across the school are capable of making greater progress and require more challenge in their learning.

Attainment in literacy and English
■ Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking
■ At early level, almost all children listen very well to their teacher and peers. A few children require support to negotiate taking turns during group activities. At first level, most children take turns and contribute relevant information and ideas during group discussions. A few children require support to share views during group tasks. At second level, almost all children express views effectively and listen respectfully to the opinions of others. They communicate clearly and audibly to a range of different audiences and purposes. They listen well to others, take notes and ask relevant questions.

Reading
■ At early level, most children can recognise, say and write individual and blended sounds. They use pictorial clues to retell familiar stories and predict what might happen next. They are enthusiastic about reading and storytelling. At first level, most children read aloud with expression and fluency. They share their favourite author and reasons for their preference confidently. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. Most children are developing confidence in using appropriate comprehension strategies to identify techniques used by authors to engage the reader. At second level, most children can explain their preference for texts. They discuss the main ideas within a text with detail and answer a range of higher order questions.

Writing
■ Most children at early level are learning to form letters correctly. They need further support in using capital letters and full stops accurately. They are beginning to apply their knowledge of sounds to spell tricky words. All children at early level now need to write more regularly and for a range of purposes, including in their play. Most children at first level demonstrate increasing understanding of sentence construction and can link ideas in sentences. At second level, most children make effective use of vocabulary choice to engage the reader. They are beginning to use a range of language techniques, for example, simile, metaphor and personification. At first and second levels, children need to continue to develop spelling strategies to support them when spelling unfamiliar words.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children across the school are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure.

- Most children at early level add and subtract to 10 with accuracy. They recognise and identify numbers to 20. Children need to improve their numeracy skills further through the context of play. At first level, children count forward and backwards in 2s, 5s and 10s. They add and subtract multiples of 10 or 100 from whole numbers up to 1000. Most children accurately estimate how long an object is. The majority need to improve their knowledge of relationships between units of measure to make simple conversions. At second level, children apply knowledge of rounding to give an estimate to a calculation appropriate to the context. They would benefit from more regular opportunities to calculate simple percentages of a quantity using both decimals and fractions. Children record time in both 12-hour and 24-hour notation and convert between the two. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in real-life situations. At second level, children are becoming increasingly confident at using a wide range of mental strategies to solve calculations.

Shape, position and movement.

- Children at early level recognise, describe and sort two-dimensional (2D) and three-dimensional (3D) objects. At first level, children know that a right angle is 90 degrees and can find angles in the environment. They can name and identify a range of simple 2D shapes and a few 3D objects. They are not yet confident at using mathematical language to describe their properties. Most children at second level describe a range of angles accurately, including obtuse and acute angles. They are less confident in calculating the size of other angles when given the value of a reflex angle. Children can name and identify a range of 3D objects. They are not yet confident at using mathematical language to describe their properties using terms such as vertices and edges.

Information handling

- At early level, most children sort items according to set criteria. They are unfamiliar with interpreting simple charts to find out information. At first level, children answer questions to extract key information from data sets including charts and graphs. At second level, children collect, organise, display, and interpret data accurately. At first and second levels, more children should be given the opportunity to develop their skills in using digital technology to collate information and create simple graphs.

Attainment over time

- Over time, children's attendance is consistently above the national average of 90.3%. Thirteen percent of children have an absence of 10% or more. This is impacting negatively on children's attainment. Children's absence is mostly because of significant illness or term-time holidays. Where appropriate, and through consultation with parents, children who have significant illness attend school on a part-time basis. The headteacher should now review these arrangements with parents and partners to ensure they meet the needs of children effectively and are for as short a time as possible. As a next step, the headteacher should share further information on the importance of good attendance with families. This should support all children to make the best possible progress in their learning.

- The headteacher gathers and tracks a range of attainment data for individual children in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. This data does not illustrate attainment over time effectively for all children. The headteacher should now develop approaches further to enable the analysis of data for individuals, groups and cohorts over time. This should support her to identify trends and to measure the impact of school improvement initiatives on attainment more effectively.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud that their achievements both in and out of school are valued and celebrated at assemblies and through an online platform. They demonstrate skills and knowledge in an extensive range of activities. These include skills in skiing, shinty, and fiddle. Their successes in a range of in-school and after-school experiences provides them with opportunities to succeed. The headteacher tracks children's achievement in these activities to ensure equity of opportunity. Children should now be supported to describe and reflect on the skills they are developing as a result of these activities.

- All children in P7 attend a residential centre where they participate in team sports and adventures alongside children from schools from their ASG. They improve their teamwork, build trust and positive relationships in advance of their transition to secondary school. All children regularly participate in school performances, demonstrating a variety of skills and knowledge, for parents and families.

- Children across the school benefit from a range of valuable opportunities to engage with community partners, including the 'Community Orchard'. Children enjoy this intergenerational work and community partners commend children's behaviour and engagement. These opportunities support children well in developing skills to become responsible citizens.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff know children and their families well. They are aware of the socio-economic context of the school community. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funds well to enhance staffing and develop approaches to literacy and numeracy. Planned approaches and strategies are having a positive impact on children's overall progress in literacy and numeracy. For example, individual and small group work is supporting targeted children to close gaps in their learning. The headteacher should now evaluate more closely the impact of planned approaches and strategies in place to improve attainment for every child. This will help her to understand how well they are closing the attainment gap caused by children's socio-economic circumstances.

- Staff work well with the community to identify areas to reduce the cost of the school day. They provide helpful initiatives, such as a uniform swap and Christmas toy and jumper swap for children and families who require it. They work closely with the Parent Council who carry out significant fundraising. This fundraising ensures that all snowsport activities are free for children and that all school trips are subsidised where needed. This ensures that no child misses out due to financial restrictions.

Other relevant evidence

■ All children receive their entitlement to two hours of physical education per week.

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.