

Summarised inspection findings

Calside Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Calside Primary School is a non-denominational school situated in the town of Dumfries, in Dumfries and Galloway. At the time of inspection, there were 184 children across eight classes. The school also has a nursery class and a local authority learning centre for children with additional support needs. Currently, 11 children attend the learning centre, and 45 children attend the nursery. The school's senior leadership team includes the headteacher, three principal teachers and one nursery manager. Across the school, 12% of children are registered for free school meals, and just over a third of children have an identified additional support need. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 7 to 10. A minority of children live in SIMD deciles 4 to 6 and a few children live in SIMD deciles 2 and 3.

This year, the senior leadership team has experienced a few acting positions due to staff leave. All substantive senior leaders have now returned to their posts. Furthermore, there have been significant changes to the teaching and support staff teams including short and long-term supply staff covering vacancies.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

- Staff know children and families very well and promote a positive and supportive ethos. Most teachers have established calm and purposeful learning environments, which helps children to focus on their learning. They use the school's values well to support a nurturing climate where children can best learn and progress. Teachers model respectful interactions with each other and children. Children are supportive of one another and contribute very well to the inclusive and friendly culture across the school. This helps most children feel safe and develop confidence. Most children know who they can speak to if they are worried or upset.
- Most children are consistently well-behaved and engage positively during learning experiences. A few children do not listen attentively when adults are sharing whole class instructions. For example, children continue to talk to their peers whilst the teacher is speaking to the class and as a result, miss important information during lessons. Most teachers use praise and positive reinforcement well to help children have a clear understanding of how to be a good learner. The headteacher recently supported staff, children and the Parent Council to develop and refine the school's 'Respect for All' policy to reflect their context. The local authority is currently reviewing the positive behaviour and relationships guidance and have invited feedback from senior leaders. A few parents would appreciate being involved in these regular reviews to understand more clearly the approaches staff use to improve children's behaviour across the school.
- In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers plan effective discrete teaching for groups. This approach meets children's needs very well. In a minority of very effective examples, teachers

provide follow-on tasks which match well to children's needs and next steps. Teachers now need to improve the consistency of the quality, range and purpose of activities provided across all lessons. They should ensure that all activities match well to the needs and abilities of individuals and groups. This should support children to better consolidate and extend their learning. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to develop a learning and teaching policy. This should support teachers to develop a shared understanding of what contributes to consistently high-quality learning and teaching.

- In most lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. In a minority of lessons, learning is overly teacher-led. This limits opportunities for children to engage with others, make choices and take ownership of their learning. The majority of children follow instructions well and complete set tasks independently. In a few effective examples, teachers use questioning well to develop children's thinking. However, in most lessons, teachers' questioning only helps children recall facts and to check understanding. Teachers now need to ensure they plan sufficient opportunities to scaffold, challenge and deepen children's understanding through more effective questioning.
- In most classes, teachers share the purpose of learning and how children will know if they are successful. This is most effective when children co-construct steps to success, helping them to be clearer about the skills they will develop as a result of their learning. A few children talk confidently about their learning and next steps. Teachers should help all children to become more aware of the relevance and purpose of what they are learning. This will help them understand what they need to do to continue to make progress.
- All teachers make effective use of interactive panels to present information and deliver lessons. Staff's work on digital literacy is having a positive impact across the school. Children develop a wide range of skills and talk confidently about how they use technology to support their learning. Children are developing skills in coding and programming, and effectively share this knowledge with others. For example, older children lead parents and older members of the local community through the digital skills sessions they deliver.
- Staff at the early stages are continuing to develop the school's approach to play pedagogy to plan appropriate play experiences. Children communicate well with each other during play and develop problem solving and fine motor skills at the 'tinker table'. Play experiences do not always support children to develop appropriate skills and knowledge. Staff need to be clearer about the purpose of planned activities and make sure they are sufficiently challenging for all children. They should continue to review their approaches to ensure there is an appropriate balance of teacher-led, adult-directed and child-led learning across the curriculum.
- All teachers use a range of assessment approaches to gather information about the progress children are making in their learning. In most classes, teachers provide feedback to children about their learning, but this is not yet of a consistently high quality. Teachers should provide written feedback that focuses on children's learning, next steps and how to improve.
- Teachers are continuing to work with stage partners and cluster colleagues to create a shared understanding of national standards and progression within a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. Senior leaders plan regular moderation activities that helpfully support professional discussions with teachers about children's progress. Staff should continue to develop more rigour in these processes. This should help to make sure teachers' professional judgements are consistently accurate and better reflect the progress children are making with learning.
- Teachers use a consistent approach to plan together. This is supported by the local authority progression planners in literacy and numeracy and other school pathways. Staff have made

links across CfE experiences and outcomes to provide creative contexts that link across different subjects. Children are confident their views about learning are considered. This motivates children and supports them in asking questions to further develop their skills and knowledge.

- The leadership team meet termly with teachers to discuss the progress of all children. These discussions assist in identifying children who may require additional supports or whose learning could be extended further. The leadership team use this information to deploy support staff to where they are needed most. Across the school, staff are skilled at putting in place effective interventions which provide appropriate support for individual children. Their use of local authority 'closing the gap' approaches is having a very positive impact on identified children's progress and attainment. The leadership team should now refresh their current tracking system to capture this valuable information in one place. This should allow them to take a more focused look at the progress of individuals and groups over time. It should also provide useful information about the impact of interventions and planned learning to help them make decisions about which interventions would benefit children as a universal approach.

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

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 is good. Most children in P1, P4 and P7 are on track to achieve nationally expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Most children who require additional support with their learning make good progress from prior levels of attainment or against their individual milestones.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children's progress in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen well, follow simple instructions and respond appropriately during group discussions with their teacher. At first level, most children offer their ideas and opinions confidently. They identify a few skills required to deliver talks and presentations successfully. At second level, most children listen well and build upon the ideas of others. They discuss the different texts read and identify important themes within the story. Across all levels, children would benefit from applying these skills to a wider range of regular planned and progressive contexts.

Reading

- At early level, most children use their knowledge of simple sounds and blends well to decode unfamiliar words. They talk about the main events in a story and predict what may happen next. Most children need support to develop faster recall of common words. At first level, most children read aloud fluently and use a few strategies to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors. At second level, most children read aloud with fluency and increasing expression. They discuss the features of different genres and share their preferred texts and the reasons for these. Children are skilled at comparing digital and written texts. Children at first and second levels need to develop a wider range of strategies to clarify unfamiliar vocabulary.

Writing

- At early level, most children write a simple sentence using a capital letter, full stop and finger spaces. At first level, most children create texts for different purposes. They use appropriate punctuation to ensure their writing makes sense to the reader. At second level, the majority of children write at increasing length across a range of genres. They select and organise information appropriate to the purpose. Across all levels, most children need to improve their handwriting and presentation. Children at first and second levels need to write more regularly and at increasing length and apply learned techniques to written work across the curriculum. There is clear evidence that staff's focus on improving writing has helped to accelerate children's progress to ensure most now work within expected levels.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Most children at early level are developing their knowledge of number bonds to ten and exploring measure through a range of play based experiences. They are beginning to develop an understanding of simple fractions and to tell the time. At first level, most children read and write numbers up to and beyond 1000 and round numbers to the nearest 10. They estimate and measure objects using standard and non-standard units well. At second level, most children round numbers accurately to one and two decimal places. They convert fractions to decimals and percentages confidently and can explain the connections between them. A minority of children should increase their recall and mental agility to apply skills to a wider range of contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children at early level confidently name common two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They use technology well to show their understanding of positional language. At first level, most children confidently name several 3D objects and describe their properties. They understand lines of symmetry and identify these on a number of 2D shapes. At second level, children confidently calculate area and perimeter and apply this to real-life contexts. They are developing their knowledge and understanding of movement through coding and programming. They should apply their knowledge of 2D shapes and 3D objects and use instruments and digital technology to represent them visually.

Information handling

- Most children at early level sort items into categories and construct simple pictograms. They answer simple questions about them. At first and second levels, most children have a good understanding of tally charts and bar graphs. They should continue to develop their knowledge and understanding of uncertainty and chance.

Attainment over time

- In recent years, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy has been inconsistent. The headteacher recognises although attainment data is now more accurate, previously teacher professional judgement was not reliable or robust. Senior leaders support teachers to engage in regular moderation using valid assessment evidence, class work and national Benchmarks to review children's progress. Teachers now use a range of data to inform discussions at attainment meetings. This approach supports teachers to make increasingly accurate judgements about children's progress and achievement of a level within CfE.
- Senior leaders have detailed information about the support individual children receive to close gaps in learning. The headteacher uses appropriately Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional support and regular practice of literacy and numeracy skills to close gaps in learning. A few children who receive intensive support in reading have improved their reading age and now work within expected levels alongside their class peers.
- Currently, senior leaders do not analyse attainment data across different groups and cohorts. They have plans to use local authority tracking tools to monitor more rigorously the progress of children who receive interventions and children who may face barriers to their learning. This should support all staff to evaluate more accurately the impact of interventions and measure children's outcomes more robustly. This includes helping senior leaders to identify trends and patterns and make decisions about successful approaches that can be applied universally.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their own and others' achievements and celebrate these in assembly and in class. These are shared on displays, in newsletters, class presentations and in the Calside Honours each session. Parents are encouraged to share their children's wider achievements with the school. This is building children's confidence and motivation.
- Staff are beginning to track and monitor children's participation in wider achievements including their involvement in leadership opportunities within the school. The majority of children are developing confidence and achieving success through participating in leadership roles such as pupil council, house captains and media managers. Staff have developed positive partnerships to support children's achievements well, such as with teachers in the local high school science department. Together, teachers plan activities which develop children's knowledge and understanding of science which supports transition well.
- Senior leaders recognise the need for children to record and track the range of skills they develop through their achievements. This should support children to better understand the skills for learning, life and work they are developing. Senior leaders should continue to enable children to take greater responsibility for wider aspects of school life and improvement.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher consults staff, parents and children on the use of PEF. Using feedback, the headteacher allocates additional funding to support with the cost of outings, residential trips, and school resources for children who are at risk of missing out. This ensures all children access experiences alongside their peers. Senior leaders use PEF well to provide additional staffing to deliver social skills groups and learning interventions. These interventions are resulting in improved attainment and wellbeing for identified children. Staff discuss the needs of children and identify those who would benefit from additional support for important life skills such as swimming. A few children receiving additional support at first and second levels are making very good progress in reading and writing.
- Almost all staff have a strong understanding of the range of barriers children may face in their learning. Senior leaders ensure all staff are aware of key issues which may affect children's progress including their socio-economic circumstances. The headteacher uses the local authority's policy on reducing the cost of the school day to identify where changes are required to support families. For example, staff have introduced a uniform swap and support families to access pre-loved uniform which also contributes towards sustainability. In addition, staff link with the local foodbank to provide food parcels for families who would benefit from this during periods of financial strain. The Parent Council provides valuable support through organising costumes for Halloween and t-shirts for sports day. This supports children and families to participate in school events without additional costs.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average. The headteacher has robust procedures in place to monitor and track both whole school attendance and the attendance of individuals and families who are at risk of poor attendance. The headteacher ensures there is regular contact between school and families to improve children's attendance and provide support where required. She makes phone calls and issues letters to remind parents of the importance of good attendance at school.

Context

The learning centre for children with additional support needs (ASN) supports children with language and communication needs. At the time of inspection, there were 11 children in the provision from P1 to P6. Children are placed in the learning centre as a result of a local authority multi-disciplinary panel. A few children attend mainstream classes on a full-time basis. The learning centre is staffed by a principal teacher, two teachers and four support staff. The principal teacher has responsibility for the learning centre and support for learning across the school. The headteacher has overall management responsibility for the learning centre.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- Most children engage positively in planned learning activities for short periods of time. They enjoy learning alongside adults and a few participate well in self-directed play. At times, a few children disengage from the planned learning and display low-level disruptive behaviours.
- Most children are motivated by the range of differentiated literacy and numeracy tasks that help them learn. Teachers plan activities carefully including a wide range of activities that are both practical and worksheet based. Almost all literacy and numeracy activities provide an appropriate level of challenge and take account of children's interests.
- Teachers create detailed plans for each child, outlining clearly their strengths and next steps in learning. They identify clear actions to support all adults who help children to learn effectively. Plans include literacy and numeracy targets alongside foundation milestones that link well to activities. These planning approaches do not link sufficiently well with learning opportunities across the curriculum. There is a need to ensure children experience more opportunities to learn through meaningful contexts linked across the curriculum which support children's individual targets.
- Staff mainly plan worksheet or jotter-based tasks. A few children use digital tablets to support their learning. Teachers need to develop more creative approaches to teaching and learning that help children understand what they are learning. This should include more use of concrete materials, practical activities and learning outdoors. In addition, staff need to improve the pace of learning, and the levels of challenge they plan within tasks.
- Learning takes place across two rooms, an interconnecting kitchen area, sensory room and an enclosed outdoor area. Furniture and resources link well to children's age and stage of development. Children are supervised well through the low child-adult staff ratio and the shared understanding of strategies to meet individual children's needs. A few children spend long periods of time sitting at desks or on the floor. In addition, they spend too long watching digital media projected on to an oversized screening area that dominates the room. Staff need to review the use of the outdoor space and children's access to physical activity to better meet children's needs.
- Teachers and support staff have clear roles and responsibilities that link well to planned learning. They implement strategies and lead on aspects of learning and teaching within the free-flow learning environment. Staff capture children's activities and aspects of learning well through detailed observations and digital content that is shared with parents. Their observations provide helpful insights into aspects of the progress that children make. Teachers' observations should be improved further to focus on how well the children are learning.

- Staff plan for groups of children in literacy, numeracy, personal and health and wellbeing using CfE guidance. Teachers' planning takes accurate account of most children's individual needs. There is a need for senior leaders to monitor staff interactions within the learning centre and classrooms to ensure consistency of approach. In addition, there is a need for staff to ensure that children's progress over time is captured effectively, and to review the effectiveness of interventions.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Children are making appropriate progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy. A few children could be making better progress across all areas of the curriculum.

Literacy, English and communication

- Children engage well with stories and books. They enjoy listening to stories and a few are mark making and forming letters. They communicate using speech, gesture and a few are beginning to use symbols. Children need more support to apply their communication skills sufficiently well across a wide range of real-life contexts.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Children are developing a good understanding of number. They add and subtract numbers successfully. A few are developing a sense of size and amount through observing, exploring and using objects of different size. They order positional numbers and read number names correctly in a range of contexts.

Attainment over time

- Targets in individual education plans and assessment information show that children make good progress over time in literacy and numeracy. There is a need for senior leaders to collate children's assessment information more effectively to show an overview of each child's progress. A few children make very good progress and access mainstream classes where they learn alongside their peers.

Achievements

- Children have appropriate opportunities to celebrate their achievements through daily routines, visual displays, an online sharing tool and progress discussions with parents. There is a need for staff to support children to develop their confidence and skills both within school, on school committees and in the community.

Other relevant evidence

- Children receive two hours of high-quality physical education (PE) weekly. They benefit from weekly sessions from a PE specialist.
- Children can access texts from the well-resourced library. Children enjoy their regular visits to the library which is enhancing children's reading for enjoyment.
- 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. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food and health promotion in the school.
- A few parents would appreciate a review of how the school approaches communication and homework. The headteacher has plans in place to involve parents in a consultation about homework. With the principal teacher, she has already begun exploring different digital apps to communicate with parents about children's learning.

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.