

Summarised inspection findings

Carmichael Primary School

South Lanarkshire Council

22 January 2019

Key contextual information

Carmichael Primary School is a small, rural, non-denominational school with a roll of 34. It serves the village of Carmichael. The village is located near Lanark in South Lanarkshire. There is a high number of placing requests within the roll. The roll is steadily increasing with larger numbers coming into the school at P1. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months and is the shared head of Braehead Primary School. Following a few years of staff instability, there is now a stable staff team in place, after temporary staff and the acting principal teacher have secured permanent posts. There are two multi composite classes, P1-3 and P4-7.

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

- Across the school, the ethos is very nurturing, caring and motivating. This results in a safe, positive and engaging learning environment for all children. Relationships between children and staff are very positive across the school community. This is an important strength of Carmichael Primary School. As a result, almost all children are motivated and fully engaged in their learning.
- Staff link learning contexts well to the school's motto of 'shine brightly', as well as the vision and values in most lessons. Staff increasingly capitalise on the school's motto, vision and values as key drivers for successful learning, change and improvement. As a result, relationships are highly positive and supportive across the school for staff and children. Children are well-mannered and courteous in classes and around the school.
- In almost all lessons, children experience appropriate challenge in their learning. Staff have correctly identified and successfully addressed the need to provide additional challenge to groups of children, in order to sustain their motivation and rate of progress. We have asked staff to continue to develop approaches to challenge children's learning, by providing more opportunities for them to apply skills in different contexts for learning.
- In almost all lessons, tasks and activities across the multi-composite classes are carefully planned and differentiated effectively. Support staff are deployed effectively by class teachers. They play a central role to allow effective flexibility in learning across the stages in the classes. This helps to ensure learning is accessible to all learners. Teaching staff plan effectively to differentiate activities, ensuring learning is well-matched to the needs of all children. Most children understand the relevance and purpose of their learning and can link this meaningfully to relevant prior learning. Teachers plan effectively together across the stages and levels. This allows for flexible groupings within both classes to provide additional challenge to some children, and meet the needs of those who require additional support to be successful in their

learning. During lessons, children have a balance of well-planned opportunities to work individually and in groups.

- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is very good. In almost all lessons, activities are well planned and teachers demonstrate skilled and effective approaches to learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff should continue to increase opportunities to share good practice, including looking outwards, to access high quality professional learning that will continue to develop the quality of teaching at all stages. Staff are currently engaging in relevant professional learning that focuses on developing learning, teaching and assessment around the four contexts for learning.
- Planning for the context of outdoor learning is a particular strength of the school. Staff make use of a local woodland area to provide children with an exciting context to learn across the curriculum. Inspectors observed very well-planned, relevant and highly engaging activities in this context across all stages. As a result all children were fully engaged in tasks and were all supported to 'shine brightly'.
- Staff work regularly in strategically focused local authority development groups with colleagues from other schools. For example, the Self-Improving Attainment Family group and the moderation group. This enhances their professional skills and helps to drive and develop the school's improvement priorities. All staff are encouraged to lead various aspects of the school's improvement work. Teachers across the stages regularly work together to plan learning and assessment across the multi-composite classes. They regularly share ideas from their professional learning and apply this in planning for learning, teaching and assessment. We have asked staff to develop further their approaches to providing quality feedback to support individual children. In doing so, children will be better supported to identify their next steps in learning.
- In the most effective lessons, children work with their class teacher to co-construct success criteria. They peer and self-assess skilfully when evaluating their work together. This is an area of the school's work that is enhancing children's confidence and progress.
- Where possible, teachers make regular use of technology to enhance their teaching. All teachers regularly adapt children's learning in a variety of environments, ensuring learning is interactive and engaging. This includes learning outdoors, where children regularly experience high quality, well-planned learning experiences to develop and apply their skills in different contexts. This keeps children motivated in their learning and promotes creativity in learning.
- For the curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, staff have developed plans for learning and teaching across all stages aligned to the National Benchmarks for assessment. Staff have correctly identified alignment with other curricular areas to their associated benchmarks as an area for development. Staff should continue to engage with colleagues in the secondary school to develop an understanding of what learning looks like beyond second level in key curricular areas. This will help them to develop further challenge for those children who are exploring aspects of third level in their learning. This will also allow children to continue to learn at an appropriate pace and be challenged in their learning, into S1.
- Staff engage regularly in planned opportunities to engage in moderation activity within the school, their partner school and across the cluster. This helps to ensure their judgement of

Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels is robust. They should continue to seek opportunities to engage in moderation more widely with colleagues beyond the cluster where possible. This will allow staff to develop a wider national perspective of standards and expectations around assessment and achievement of a CfE level.

- Arrangements for transition between the stages are in place. This is helped by the regular close working and planning with the teachers across both classes. Teachers work well with colleagues from the secondary school to plan transition activities to ensure smooth progression from P7 to S1. Built into this transition planning are earlier opportunities for children who require an, enhanced transition programme, to build their confidence and motivation prior to starting S1.
- Class teachers and the headteacher meet regularly to discuss individual children's progress. They review targets and interventions for children. We discussed with staff the benefits of children having personal learning targets that apply across the curricular areas. These should be manageable and up-to-date in order to provide learners with clear direction on how to improve. This will also provide teachers with further evidence in their judgement of progress through a CfE level.
- Staff have developed systems to capture children's involvement in wider engagement activities, both within and outwith the school. As a next step, staff should now develop this further in order to track the engagement and associated skills that children are developing through these activities. Overall, tracking and monitoring systems are in place to review all children's progress across areas of the curriculum. These are used effectively by the headteacher and staff to inform regular, well-documented target setting and ensures that planning for learning meets the needs of all children.

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

- Across the school, the majority of children are making good progress in reading and writing with most making good progress in listening and talking and numeracy. There are a significant number of children who require additional support with their learning. They are being supported well to make the best possible progress. The school is able to demonstrate how children who require additional help with learning, are making progress from prior levels. An effective range of strategies are in place to raise the attainment for individuals and groups of children in both literacy and numeracy. This includes support with reading and numeracy. This provides a good balance of support and challenge for children who require this in their learning. Along with the headteacher, staff regularly review these strategies to ensure maximum impact on children's progress. The 'Catch Up' literacy programme has had a very positive impact on individual children's reading skills.
- Due to the fact that every cohort in this school is fewer than ten, statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children.
- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is good. Although small class numbers affect the overall attainment data more noticeably, the majority of children are on track to achieve appropriate CfE levels by the end of the current session. Staff plan very well together to ensure a balance of planning at stages and across levels in order to provide a range of opportunities for children to be supported and challenged further in their learning. Across the school children are making good progress in reading, writing, listening and talking.

Listening and Talking

- Across all stages, most children speak confidently with their peers and adults and listen well for instructions and information. They are skilled at taking turns and responding appropriately to prompts and information, especially by the end of first level and into second level. As they progress through the stages, children are developing their ability to listen during class discussions and most children can offer their opinions and views and ask pertinent questions. Teachers also provide regular opportunities for children to provide feedback to their peers. By the end of first level and into second level, most children can identify the purpose of spoken texts and respond appropriately. In classes, children are developing their skills in talking to an audience and presenting information. There is now scope for children to have increased opportunities to take on further leadership roles in their learning to develop further their confidence in presenting to peers and a variety of audiences.

Reading

- Almost all children can talk confidently about books they are reading and what kinds of books they enjoy. Children at the early stages are using a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words with confidence. At the early level, children are developing their reading skills through developing their understanding of phonemes. They are developing their understanding and use of sounds, letters and patterns to access a variety of common words with growing confidence. This is having a positive impact in allowing children to enjoy and understand a range of reading sources. There is scope for children to experience more opportunities to read aloud with their peers. This will help to develop their understanding and application of punctuation and expression. As they progress in their learning, children are developing their understanding and application of a range of literary techniques. For example, by the end of first level, most children can understand and apply techniques such as similes, metaphors and imagery into their own writing, from a range of reading stimuli. They can use these strategies well to read and understand unfamiliar vocabulary. By the end of first level and into second level, most children can identify key ideas of a text, skim and scan for specific information and distinguish between fiction and non-fiction.

Writing

- At the early stages, most children are beginning to write regularly for a variety of purposes, for example, in imaginary and real-life contexts. They can apply rules from literary techniques they have learnt to improve the accuracy of their spelling. Most children at the early stages are beginning to apply skills in the use of basic punctuation, in order to structure their writing. As they progress through first level, children develop skills in using a wider range of punctuation and structures to develop the maturity of their writing. They apply these rules to write for an increasing range of purposes. By the end of P4, children are developing skills to write more extended pieces in imaginative writing. They use varied sentence structures and literary techniques acquired from reading, to engage the reader. By the end of first level, most children successfully organise their writing in paragraphs; can start sentences in a variety of ways; and write for a range of purposes. By the end of first level and into second level, the majority of children can create more mature texts for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting appropriate genre. Across the school, children write for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. Across the levels, there is further scope for children to transfer their learning from taught writing lessons and other varied reading stimuli into the range of purposes of their writing. By second level, the majority of children can create texts of length for a variety of audiences and a range of purposes with increasing confidence.

Attainment over time

- Overall, the school shared an accurate picture of children's achievement of CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. There are a range of different factors which are influencing how attainment over time is presented. This includes the very small numbers in the school; the significant number of children who have additional learning needs; and the high number of children who have joined the school over the last 18 months. However, overall, the school is able to demonstrate progress overtime for most children. Staff report that they now have a more robust picture of children's attainment over time. This is providing them with a clearer picture of children's progress as they move through the school. There are different opportunities for staff to engage in moderation work within and outwith the school. Staff have become more confident making reliable professional judgements over the last two years. They work effectively with their partner school, Braehead Primary, to develop a shared understanding of levels. This is a very productive partnership.

- The headteacher has put in place robust approaches for tracking children's attainment and achievement. Together with staff, children's attainment is regularly reviewed to ensure appropriate challenge and support is in place. Interventions are planned to support children to make the best possible progress. For a few children who are working beyond second level, staff have liaised with colleagues in the local secondary school to ensure children receive appropriate challenge in learning.
- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Overall, children are performing better in numeracy than literacy.

Number, money and measurement

- At the early level, children have a good understanding of numbers to 20. They confidently calculate simple addition within ten. Most use practical materials to support them with their calculations. At the early stages of the school, children demonstrate a very good understanding of number. They can order numbers beyond 30, easily identifying missing numbers. They can add and subtract numbers to 20. They are able to identify halves and a few can identify quarters. A few children would benefit from revisiting aspects of their previous learning in money. By the end of first level, children display a very good knowledge of number. Their mental agility is developing well as a result of their work on 'number talks'. By the end of first level children can manipulate numbers well to double and to round to the nearest 100. They can add, subtract, multiply and divide at an appropriate level. They are able to undertake addition of different amounts of money. They can articulate how and when they make use of different strategies to make accurate calculations. They can identify simple fractions such as a half and a quarter and can explain equivalence. Most have a good understanding of money. At the second level most children are making good progress with a few children exceeding at this level. They use their knowledge of multiplication tables well to undertake both multiplication and division sums. A few children are able to round numbers beyond 10,000 and round decimal numbers to one place. A few at second level demonstrate a very good understanding of common and decimal fractions and percentages. A few are able to access more third level learning.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early stages, children demonstrate a good knowledge of two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects. They can identify the properties of cubes and cuboids. At the end of first and at second level, children can identify a wide range of two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects using specific vocabulary to describe the different properties. They have a good understanding of coordinates and applied their knowledge well in an outdoor learning context. At first level, children can identify and demonstrate lines of symmetry in two dimensional shapes.

Information handling

- At the early stages, children can display and interpret simple data. At first level, children can display data in different and appropriate ways. By second level, most children can interpret data from a wide range of sources.

Time

- At the early stages, children are able to recognise o'clock and half past on an analogue clock. They can say the days of the week in sequence and identify different seasons. By the end of the first level, most have a good understanding of days of week, months of the year and seasons. They are able to recognise, o'clock, half past and quarter to/past. A few children working at second level can record time in both 12 hour and 24 hour notation.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff across the school are committed to ensuring that all children have opportunities to 'shine brightly'. To this end, children's achievements within and outwith the school are recorded and celebrated through school assemblies, wall displays and an achievement folder. Increasingly, children can make links to and between their achievements to skills for life, learning and work. Older children gain valuable skills from their leadership of the 'creative choices' groups. We have asked staff to support children to identify which particular skills they are developing from their involvement in planning, delivering and participating in these weekly sessions. Helpfully, children set targets for achievements outwith school, recognising the importance of these to their progress. As recognised, the school should now track children's achievements more robustly.

Equity for all

- There is a clear commitment of all staff to ensuring children at Carmichael Primary School have equitable experiences. Due to the rural context where almost all children have to travel to school by transport, teachers have put in place a number of lunch time clubs. This allows all children to have the opportunity to access a wide range of extra-curricular learning opportunities. The weekly 'creative choices' groups led by older pupils also enable all children to benefit from learning in different contexts. The weekly visits to the local woodland area provide all children with an interesting and exciting context to support learning. Targeted interventions are in place to support children who require additional support with their learning to make the best possible progress. Staff provide sensitive support to children and families who may be experiencing particular challenges. A lunchtime homework club has also been established to ensure all children benefit from homework support. The Pupil Equity Fund is used to secure additional resources to support targeted interventions. This includes additional staffing as well as new resources. The impact of these is carefully monitored and evaluated by staff and the headteacher.

Practice worth sharing more widely:

- Staff at Carmichael Primary School have successfully developed a wide range of meaningful and relevant opportunities for children to learn outdoors. Staff have applied ideas and theory from relevant professional learning in order to extend these opportunities and to allow children to make connections across different contexts for learning, with success. As a result, children experience highly effective and well-planned opportunities to extend their learning outdoors within their very attractive local environment. This provides a very relevant and appropriate basis to develop learning and teaching approaches in this way. Teachers plan contexts for learning outdoors which are aligned to experiences and outcomes at appropriate levels for all children. Assessment is designed through the associated National Benchmarks for the various curricular areas being explored. Overall, the detailed approaches to planning by teachers allow these highly developed learning experiences outdoors to benefit all children at Carmichael Primary School. This aspect of the school's work is a notable strength which allows learning to come alive.

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.