Education Scotland
Foghlam Alba

# Summarised Inspection Findings

# Carmondean Primary School and Nursery Class

# West Lothian Council

# SEED No: 5502926

# 6 June 2017

Transforming lives through learning

# Section One

# Summarised Inspection Findings

# Carmondean Primary School

| 1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE | *good* |
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This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community*
- *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
- *Implementing improvement and change*

- The school vision, values and aims are outlined clearly and underpin the life of the school. All staff show commitment to these features of school life and children speak positively about respectful relationships which are nurtured in the school. Whilst the vision, values and aims have been revised over recent years in consultation with teachers and parents, the leadership team now plan to consult with children to refresh these further. The school should take greater account of its social, economic and cultural context in further developing the vision, values and aims. It should also use existing structures, such as the school parliament and pupil council, to effectively enable this process.

- The school improvement planning process is key to on-going improvement in the school. The process is supported strongly by staff who talk positively about the collaborative nature of improvement planning. Staff appreciate being involved in the design of the plan, as well as the regular dialogue linked to its evaluation. Senior leaders are careful to prioritise targets and manage an appropriate pace of change for staff. However, although the plan does take account of school, local and national priorities, there is scope for it to be more ambitious. The school should use data more effectively to target specific areas of improvement, placing increased focus on developing equity and excellence, closing identified attainment gaps and fostering more awareness of skills relating to the world of work. Senior leaders recognise that there would be benefit in involving parents and community partners more consistently in planning.

- Commendably, staff are successful in articulating the impact of previous plans.

- The school uses a range of strategies to monitor learning, teaching and assessment, and seeks to ensure consistent, high quality practice across the school. Focused classroom observations, linked to priorities identified in the improvement plan, are used effectively to impact on teaching and learning. Teachers value the individual feedback they receive from senior leaders, as well as whole school feedback which is collated and shared following a range of observations. Other aspects of quality assurance, such as sampling children's work and learners' journals, need to be more rigorous and show increased expectations of children's learning. The school should consider developing peer observation strategies, to enable teachers to benefit more regularly from the practice and views of their colleagues.

- The headteacher, and her depute and principal teachers, are respected by the school

community. They model good leadership and they work well together as a team. They are highly committed to the ongoing development of a collaborative and empowering school culture, which welcomes the views of all staff. Leadership at all levels is encouraged and supported. All teachers engage in improvement teams which nurture their strengths and areas of interest and teachers are supported to undertake additional learning activities and/or initiatives. These include on-going study, participation in local authority leadership work which leads to professional recognition awarded by the General Teaching Council for Scotland), and leading whole school activities. Aspects of practitioner enquiry work have been implemented by a few staff across the school. Teachers' professional learning is also enhanced by well-planned, detailed presentations which are shared at whole school meetings. Sometimes these are related directly to improving learning, teaching and assessment; however they also link to awareness-raising of current issues, such as Prevent. Children's leadership is also fostered well, in classrooms and in the wider school. Through participating in the school parliament, presentations at assemblies, buddying and dialogue linked to the development of their learning they show themselves to be confident, articulate and well-mannered. They speak passionately about the opportunities they are given at Carmondean Primary School.

| 2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT | *good* |
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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*

- The school can demonstrate effective on-going work around children's rights across all stages. Children and all staff are working together to develop clear expectations around the responsibility and accountability of all in delivering children's rights. During almost all lessons, in all classes, children are motivated and enjoy their learning. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups, participating fully in their learning. Children are given a voice through a wide variety of groups, including the pupil parliament. They feel their views are listened to and acted upon. They understand that their suggestions should lead to improvements in their learning. Children exemplified this by the increased opportunities they now have for learning mathematics outdoors. There are opportunities in most classes for children to reflect upon what they already know about a context, what they want to find out more about and what they have learned.

- Teachers and support staff work well together to support all children in their learning. There is a caring atmosphere where children feel safe and happy in school. Teachers meet with colleagues and with the senior leadership team to evaluate learning and teaching and identify areas for improvement. In most classes the quality of teaching is effective with clear explanations of the purpose of the activities. In almost all classes teachers share the learning intentions and success criteria with children. Teachers could encourage children to be involved in identify the success criteria to further develop children's understanding of their learning. Teachers provide oral and written feedback to children. However, in the majority of classes the feedback could focus more specifically on the learning. A variety of digital technology is used across the school to both enhance and support learning. Laptops are used effectively for collaborative work and to support children who have additional support needs. Visualizers are used for peer assessment and to share examples of good learning with others in the class. Tablets are used to strengthen children's understanding of key concepts in literacy and numeracy at all stages in the school. Teachers should now ensure that in lessons they have high expectations of all children and that children are progressing at a more challenging pace.

- Most teachers use a range of assessment strategies daily in the classroom, including peer and self-assessment, to monitor children's progress. Information from standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy is available for all children at all stages. Teachers use summative assessments in mathematics and reading to build confidence when making professional judgements of children achieving curriculum for excellence levels. Three

times a year, time is allocated for an assessment week. Although a wide variety of assessments are used by teachers, the data is not used effectively to improve outcomes for learners. We encourage staff to review the quantity, quality and purpose of assessments.

- Teachers work collaboratively with their stage partners to moderate the planned learning each term. The learning is linked to progression pathways in most curriculum areas. Teachers identify the knowledge and skills which will be taught and identify appropriate teaching strategies to engage children in their learning. Teachers should identify assessment opportunities when planning learning and teaching, to ensure assessment is an integral part of learning and teaching. To ensure expectations are high enough, greater use should be made of the national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy. In making these changes the data gathered on children's progression within a curriculum for excellence level and achievement of a level will become more valid and reliable. More opportunities for moderation within the school and with other schools and sectors would increase teachers' understanding of standards and their confidence when making professional judgements.

- The senior leadership team meet regularly with teachers to discuss children's progress in learning. As improvements are made to the process of planning for learning, teaching and assessment, there will be increased opportunity for these discussions to become more focused on children's progress in learning. A tool for monitoring and tracking children's progress in literacy and numeracy has been developed over a number of years. Although this tool provides an overview of children's progress across the school, the information has become over complicated. When reviewing the effectiveness of the tool account should be taken of information which could be used to identify children's needs and to close the attainment gap.

## 2.2 CURRICULUM: theme 2: Learning Pathways

- Through the religious and moral education (RME) programme children are increasingly aware of the diversity of religions and are developing a respect for all religions. Children have developed knowledge of other European countries through their links with ERASMUS. Some classes share learning with children in other countries. We ask that staff look at ways in which these links can have improved impact on the curriculum and planned learning.

- Staff plan a broad range of experiences across the curriculum for all children. Staff use progression pathways to underpin the learning in literacy numeracy and health and wellbeing. They plan to bundle the Experiences and Outcomes (Es&Os) for other curricular areas. However, this activity requires to be underpinned by clear progression pathways to ensure children make appropriate progress through the CfE levels in all subjects. This would enable staff to more confidently report on progress and attainment of children across the curriculum. Staff provide a range of contexts to motivate children and help them make links in their learning. Staff should work together with their cluster colleagues to develop an approach to interdisciplinary learning that is more responsive to children's local circumstances and the unique nature of their school. There is scope and opportunity for staff to now undertake professional learning to develop a deep understanding of the nature of interdisciplinary learning.

- Approaches to assessment and moderation require to be more closely linked to planned learning across all curricular areas.

## 2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: theme 3 Impact on learners – Parental Engagement

- Almost all parents are very positive about their relationship with the school. They find staff are approachable, supportive and responsive to their concerns. The Parent Council is well informed about the areas of improvement priorities for the school. Parents are regularly consulted on their views of the school.

- Staff have established a range of opportunities such as workshops and open days which are increasingly supporting parents to understand how they can support their children's learning and achievements. The school worked well with parents to establish the new vision and values for the school. As the school moves forward with developing target setting and learning logs there is scope to involve parents more in their child's learning.

- Homework has been reviewed as a result of feedback from parents. Literacy and numeracy homework at all stages enables parents to support their children and gain insights into how well their children are doing.

## 2.1: SAFEGUARDING

- 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

| 3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION | *very good* |
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This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

- The school's aims include a strong focus on promoting wellbeing, fairness and respect for others. There is a well-developed holistic approach to ensure all staff understand their role in relation to wellbeing and the impact on learning for children and their families. Strong positive relationships are evident between staff, children, parents and partner agencies. Individuals are valued, encouraged and respected. All of this creates a culture where children are supported to reach their goals and they know who to turn to if they need support.

- There is a considerable commitment to children's rights and the school has gained the recognition of a Rights Respecting School level 2 award for its on-going work. Weekly assemblies focus on different articles of the United Nations Council on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the school has its own charter based on selected articles of the convention. All staff are effective role models showing the importance of respect, communication skills and empathy in their interactions with other adults and children. The creation of 'Class Charters' has led to children and staff working together to understand the expectations of all regarding behaviour. Children and staff say this is having a positive impact on class ethos and behaviour. Children are able to talk with knowledge and confidence about rights and responsibilities and show care and respect for others.

- Children have a very good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. They are able to talk confidently and are knowledgeable about what the wellbeing indicators mean. Children showed a good understanding of their own health and wellbeing and could talk about this in relation to the wellbeing indicators, at different stages of their lives and in different situations. For example, they understand that they have a responsibility for their own behaviour and attitudes in particular situations. They willingly support their peers in challenging situations to make everyone feel included and respected.

- There are a range of opportunities for children to be active participants in the life of the school. Children are able to talk with confidence about their involvement in the pupil council, pupil parliament, eco committee and house system. They spoke about making a difference to their school, such as changing the litter bins in the playground and encouraging pupils to use them. A group is currently working on a project to 'build a perfect playground' to provide more opportunities for seating that can also be used for outdoor learning opportunities. Pupils involved are able to reflect on the skills they are developing as a result of their involvement in these school groups. The school should continue to develop its approaches to ensuring children are active participants in discussions about their learning and in leading

learning.

- Overall, school leaders have a good understanding of statutory duties. Inspectors discussed with them how the food standards at lunchtime are not being fully met in line with the Health Promotion and Nutrition (HPN) Act. The analysis provided of the lunchtime menu shows that further work is needed to ensure all standards are met across each week.

- The school has very good procedures in place for supporting almost all children's learning. Support for learning staff work in very close partnership with classroom teachers to identify and provide a range of additional support for children and staff. In addition to directly supporting children, this includes consultation about planning to meet additional support needs, assessment of needs, and the provision of additional resources and training. This means that staff have a very good understanding of the holistic needs of children and their families, and children feel very well supported to do their best. Pupil support workers, who support children very well indeed, would benefit from additional training to help them to manage and support children experiencing challenge in coping with school.
- Children with additional support needs each have a comprehensive individual education plan (IEP) which is reviewed regularly. There is evidence of children achieving their well-defined short and long term targets in their IEP. Wellbeing indicators are used in the 'Assessment of Wellbeing' for some children and appropriate support strategies are founded on this baseline assessment. Effective targeted support is planned for children such as maths recovery programmes, reading groups, support circles and life skills groups as well as challenge groups for more able children. Pastoral transitions are well planned and there is enhanced transition for children with additional support needs. A wide range of partners support this work to very good effect.

- School leaders should now build on their very good understanding of children's additional support needs and take a more strategic overview. They should adapt approaches and available resources to meet the needs of all children to ensure improvements. For example, a strategic analysis of the needs over time could identify areas of improvement required in current courses and programmes.

- International education has been a very valuable focus through the school's 'Erasmus' programme. For example, children learned about the different ways in which Christmas is celebrated in different countries and religions. Children also described using digital technology to communicate with teachers when they were on study visits to some of the countries involved in the Erasmus programme. Staff have undertaken training in equality and diversity and there is a comprehensive and progressive coverage of religious and moral education (RME). This takes individual religious beliefs into account. As a result of these approaches, children demonstrate a very good understanding of diversity, individual differences and the wider world.

- Pupils' achievements are regularly recognised and celebrated. A 'Celebrating Success' wall displays special person awards, based on the four capacities, which are given to children. Children are encouraged to show their talents at assemblies and to invite staff to come and see their good work in class. Pupils are proud of their achievements and talked about the displays with confidence. Free time Fridays reward good behaviour. Overall this results in very good behaviour and

low rates of exclusion.

## 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 English:**

- Overall children's attainment in English language and literacy is good. The majority of children at the end of P1 achieve the early level in reading, with most achieving early level in writing and listening and talking. The majority of children by the end of P4 achieve first level reading and writing, with most achieving the first level in listening and talking. In P7 most children achieve second level in reading and listening and talking with the majority achieving second level writing.

**Listening and Talking:**

- At all stages in the school children are developing and applying skills in listening and talking across learning. Children listen attentively, with respect when working in pairs and in groups. There are regular opportunities for all children at all stages to deliver individual talks to their class on a context chosen by them. At the early stages children are developing their understanding of turn taking when working in groups. Most children in P1 readily share ideas with the class and can follow simple instructions. When delivering a class talk, children in P4 selected appropriate pictures to engage the children in their class. At the upper stages children work collaboratively to deliver group talks to their class or to a wider audience at assembly. When listening in class children ask pertinent questions, demonstrating their ability to listen attentively. Children in P5 to P7 would benefit from structured group discussions, giving them the opportunity to offer their own view point on a subject and build on the contribution of others.

**Reading:**

- This year a new programme, focusing on phonics for teaching reading, has been introduced to P1. Although the children's skills in blending has improved, teachers have recognised the need to adopt a more combined approach to teaching reading and writing which includes a renewed focus on learning the most common words. By P4, children have a clear understanding of the reading strategies they can use to decode words and understand a text. They understand the difference between fact and opinion and how to check the accuracy of information online. They can discuss their favourite book, the main characters, setting and why they enjoyed reading the book. In P7 children are given opportunities to choose the novels being studied in relation to their study of World War II. They can explain which sources are most accurate and recognise emotive and persuasive language in a text. Children in P4-P7 have regular opportunities to engage with text online for note-taking purposes. They would benefit from opportunities to develop literal, inferential and evaluative questions and participate in reading activities.

**Writing:**

In most classes children have regular opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. In P1 almost all children are at the early stages of writing independently. They would benefit from daily opportunities for independent have a go writing to develop their confidence in themselves as writers. In taught writing lessons there is a need to focus on capital letters, full stops and finger spacing. By P4, most children write in a clear, legible way using appropriate grammar, conjunctions and spelling. The majority of children in P7 use appropriate vocabulary when conveying thoughts and feelings and developing characters and settings. Visualisation is helping to develop children's descriptive language. At all stages teachers should focus more on teaching punctuation and, with children, developing individual targets to help improve their writing.

**Attainment in numeracy and mathematics;**

- Overall children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children have achieved early level by the end of P1. The majority of children achieve first level by the end of P4 and second level by the end of P7.

- Assessment data provided by the school is based on teachers' judgements and ongoing school assessments shows that most children achieve early level in mathematics by the end of P1 and P4. The school have identified a dip in attainment by the end of the second level and have taken steps to address this area.

**Number, Money and Measure:**

- By the end of P1 most children across the school are able to identify and know the numbers stories of numbers within 10 and most children can carry out simple addition within ten. Most children can identify o'clock and half past times on an analogue clock. By the end of P4 most children can identify place value within tens and units. Most children in P4 know the numerator and denominator of a fraction and can identify and write simple fractions. By the end of P7 most children can work with analogue and digital time and convert between 12 and 24 hour time. Most children in P7 can identify equivalent fractions and perform addition, subtraction, multiplication and divisions involving up to four digit numbers by two digit numbers.

- Across the school children are learning about money. Children in P3 are able to identify coins and their value. By P7 children are able to use money to calculate cost and change within large sums of money. Most children can compare value for money deals and are aware of the rage of ways payments can be made.

**Shape Position and Movement**

- Children in P7 can name a range of 3D shapes, identify how many vertices and edges they have and identify their nets. By P7 children can name a range of 3D objects and can discuss their properties of 3D objects. Most children by P7 were aware of acute and obtuse angles and could describe them accurately.

**Information Handling:**

- By the end of P4 children are able to use bar graphs, pictograms and Venn diagrams to illustrate information from surveys. They can interpret this information to answer questions such as which is their peers favourite fruit. By the end of P7 children showed knowledge of a limited range of graphs and their

purposes.

**Probability and chance:**

- Children in P4 can describe the likelihood of an event whilst children in P7 can calculate the probability of rolling an odd number on a dice.

**Problem solving**

- Across the school children are provided with problem solving lessons to ensure children are exposed to a range of problem solving strategies. As a result a majority of children can identify a few strategies for solving problems. The school should now integrate the approach to problem solving into daily lessons to ensure children are presented with mathematics and numeracy in problem solving contexts regularly.

**Attainment over time**

- The school has correctly identified the need to prioritise attainment in numeracy and mathematics and teachers are now making better use of mental agility skills in class to support the development of children's numeracy skills. The school needs to develop further their analysis of available assessment data to ensure effective interventions are targeted and lead to improvements in children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

- Across the school children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff monitor children's progress fairly well and have identified gaps in children's progress in early literacy in P1 and mathematics in P7 and have taken steps to address these areas.

**Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- The school is successfully promoting the importance of achievements and the contribution these make to individuals and the whole school community. Children are able to discuss their roles as school group members and the contribution they make to improvements in the way the school operates.

- Almost all children are confident and contribute well to discussions around decision making and generating ideas for improvements in the school. There are a variety of relevant opportunities for children to get involved in school groups. These groups help to consolidate children's understanding of key issues and the influence they can have on developments. Children could talk about the skills they are learning and how these would be useful in different situations such as the workplace.

- The school is tracking individual children's achievements and participation. Across the school, children take great pride representing their school in sports festivals, music and drama performances and in community events. Staff do know and monitor those children who are at risk of missing out and will guide individuals toward suitable activities and clubs. This could be developed further to explore the potential barriers to participation. Closer monitoring of the effectiveness of such interventions would help to identify which other resources may be required. This approach could also capture the skills children are acquiring through their interests and achievements and how this is taken account of in planning learning.

- The school has gained numerous awards and recognition for different areas of its work in improving awareness of environmental issues, promoting a culture of respect and inclusion, promoting the role of volunteers and supporting others who live in challenging circumstances through fund-raising activities. The awards include Eco School Scotland Green Flags (7), Rights Respecting School level 2, Erasmus+ (exchange visits and continued contact), Diana Awards, Burns Society Awards (choral) and Sport Scotland School Sport Silver award and the Tanzania project to support children whose families have been affected by AIDS and HIV.

**Equity for all learners**

- The senior management team analyse teachers' predictions of children's attainment against SIMD data. This supports them to identify children experiencing disadvantage who are not progressing as well as expected and to intervene appropriately. This SIMD data analysis supported the school to identify a group of children requiring additional support in numeracy and mathematics and appropriate interventions have been deployed.

- There is scope for the school to improve how it uses the range of available data, including SIMD figures, to identify groups of children who are not progressing as well as expected. The effectiveness of subsequent interventions should be monitored and tracked to ensure improvements in the attainment of identified groups of children, particularly those facing socio-economic disadvantage.

## SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 2.6 TRANSITIONS

- **Arrangements to support learners and their families**
- **Collaborative planning and delivery**
- **Continuity and progression in learning**

- The school makes very good efforts to ensure that parents of children in the nursery are appropriately engaged in their children's transition into P1. Parents and children receive very helpful information about P1. They attend activity days and induction meetings to introduce them to the school and their new teacher. In addition, school staff make home visits to parents whose children attend nurseries other than Carmondean Nursery.

- The new electronic 'learning journal' which is being used in the nursery for the first time this year allows staff to record their observations of children's learning and share these with parents by email. This is well placed to form a very useful part of the nursery to P1 transition record this year. Its further development and continued use will help to support children's learning progression from nursery to P1.

- P6 pupils act as buddies for children in the nursery. They continue in this role as P7 buddies when the nursery children move into P1. This provides good support to children as they transition into P1.

- There are good transition arrangements for children with additional support needs, including the small number of children who are on shared placements. The school ensures that information on children's needs and progress are shared and jointly reviewed by staff in both establishments. Each child has an IEP which is jointly owned by each establishment.

- There is a comprehensive and well-planned transition programme for children moving to secondary school. The programme includes a range of planned visits to secondary school which start when pupils are in P6 and opportunities for secondary teachers to teach lessons to P7 classes. The 'Thursday Club' provides very good enhanced support for those pupils who require additional support and reassurance in their transition to the local secondary school.

- To improve transition arrangements, the school should continue to work with partners in the local secondary school and ensure that continuity and progression in learning is in place for all children from primary to secondary school. As the school reviews its learning pathways and its system for tracking pupils' progress in learning, it should build on the very good arrangements it has for pastoral transition through the school and ensure that transitions build on children's prior learning,

# Section Two

# Summarised Inspection Findings

# Carmondean Primary School and Nursery Class

| 1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE | *good* |
|---|---|

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the nursery within in its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- *Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the nursery and its community*
- *Strategic planning for continuous improvement*
- *Implementing improvement and change*

- The nursery has gone through a period of change. The recently appointed acting principal teacher has developed good relationships with the nursery team and is providing a very good role model for practitioners. A number of positive changes have taken place in relation to curriculum planning and the environment for play and learning. The acting principal teacher has led and managed these changes well. She has provided support and guidance to practitioners to enable them to be clear about their vision for the nursery and the pedagogy that they wish to achieve. The nursery will benefit from ongoing strategic direction from the senior leadership team to ensure continuous improvement.

- The vision, values and aims of the nursery are shared with the primary school. These have been recently refreshed through consultation with practitioners. When developing this further it will be important to fully reflect the context of the nursery and involve parents in the process.

- While specific leadership roles have not yet been established within the nursery a few practitioners are taking forward areas of interest. This now needs to be developed further and involve all practitioners to build capacity and ensure the nursery continues to provide quality early learning and childcare. Continuous professional learning opportunities, including, visits to other settings are enabling practitioners to reflect on and improve their practice. This includes looking outwards to research international approaches.

- Within the nursery, there are examples of self-evaluation activity involving practitioners, parents and children. However, practitioners are not yet engaging with new national guidance to support self-evaluation. Regular meetings with practitioners, provide opportunities for the team to discuss informally what is working well within the nursery and what needs to improve. The forthcoming training session on using the new national self-evaluation framework will be valuable to practitioners to support professional dialogue and the self-evaluation process. As planned, practitioners should develop a system for improvement planning that sets out clearly the priorities for the nursery. It will be important to build into the process strategies for monitoring and evaluating the impact of change.

| 2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT | *good* |
|---|---|

This indicator focuses on ensuring high quality learning experiences for young children. It highlights the importance of a very good understanding of child development and early learning pedagogy. Effective use is made of observation to inform future learning and identify the progress made. Children are involved in planning for their own learning. Together these ensure children's successes and achievements are maximised. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
- *Quality of interactions*
- *Effective use of assessment*
- *Planning, tracking and monitoring*

- Children are enthusiastic and motivated in their play. Most engage well with a range of stimulating experiences. They are confident to make choices and decisions about their play, resulting in children being confident to lead their own learning. Most children access the full range of experiences available both indoors and outdoors. A high number of children sustain interest in learning experiences for extended periods of time. Children who require additional support to focus on tasks are supported well.

- Relationships between practitioners and children are warm, caring and respectful. Interactions are positive and responsive. Overall, practitioners support children's play and learning well through effective scaffolding and use of questions to support, extend and deepen children's learning. There is a clear focus on building children's vocabulary and developing their numeracy skills during free play and adult led activities.

- Most children are confident using a range of digital technology to support their learning. The talking board is particularly helpful in supporting children with the snack routine. This approach could be extended to support children to talk about their learning and achievements in other areas.

- All children have an individual electronic learning journal. Practitioners continue to develop their skills in observation and assessment. Recent support and feedback from the acting principal teacher is increasing practitioners' confidence and skill in recording observations of children and identifying significant learning. As recognised, on-going support will be required for practitioners to identify relevant next steps in learning that are clear and focus on the development of skills. Practitioners should now consider ways to engage children more effectively in using their online journals. This will enable children to talk about their learning, and together, with practitioners identify what they might learn next. As a team, practitioners regularly meet to discuss the progress children are making and the action required to ensure children are given the appropriate support and challenge.

- The recently introduced planning system is now more consultative and responsive to children's needs, ideas and interests. Tracking and monitoring of children's learning is at an early stage of development. Planning for children who require additional support needs to be reviewed to ensure targets are evaluated and next steps identified within appropriate timescales. As planned, practitioners should implement a system that will give an overview of the progress all children are making in their development and learning.

## 2.2 CURRICULUM: theme 2: Learning and Development Pathways

- In the nursery children receive a broad range of experiences firmly developed through explorative and investigative play opportunities. At the time of the inspection practitioners had reorganised the playrooms following an extension to the premises. Commendably, the learning environment is well developed, attractive and offering a range of motivating learning experiences including outdoor learning.

- Practitioners plan learning using the experiences and outcomes and the design principles from Curriculum for Excellence. They are responsive to children's interests and reflect these across the play areas. Practitioners propose to develop further their use of floor books to improve how they plan learning with children.

- Practitioners have clear areas of responsibility for areas of the nursery. They each take responsibility to plan for curricular areas within these sections of the nursery. We discussed the possibility of extending the time practitioners are in areas to allow them to plan for progression and depth of learning over time.

- The use of the e-learning journals helps track children's progress through the curriculum and identifies next steps in learning. There are arrangements in place to begin working with school staff to plan learning across the early level to ensure appropriate standards and pace of learning through the early level. This will strengthen the approach to progress through the early level.

- Practitioners provide children with a good range of opportunities to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all areas of play. Children are confident in using digital technology such as the interactive whiteboard, remote control toys and electronic tablets in their learning.

- Children move freely between indoors and outdoors. Good use is made of the outdoor environment to support learning. The wide range of natural and open-ended resources is encouraging children's creativity, curiosity and problem solving skills. Children are learning about sustainability through planting and growing and recycling. Enterprise skills are being developed through opportunities to sell the food grown from the garden. There is scope for practitioners to consider a range of ways to develop these skills further.

## 2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: theme 3 Impact on children and families – Parental Engagement

- The nursery engages with a few partners. This includes visits from the emergency services and outings to the local supermarket and library. Children particularly enjoy music and interactive story sessions provided by a local partner. There is scope to increase the range of partners involved in the nursery.

- Home link bags are provided to support children and parents to play and learn together within their home environment. Resources and activity ideas have been carefully selected to promote early literacy and numeracy as well as a range of other skills. The 'stay and play' sessions that are about to begin will provide further opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning and become involved in the life of the nursery.

- Children's achievements and progress are shared with parents through electronic learning journals and parents meetings. Increasingly, parents are using the electronic learning journals to make comment on their child's learning.

- Parents speak positively about the partnership they have with the nursery. They feel well supported by practitioners and encouraged to share home learning with practitioners. The new approach to profiling children's learning in the nursery using e-portfolios encourages parents to view their children's learning online and enables parents to comment on their child's learning.

## 2.1: SAFEGUARDING

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant practitioners 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

| 3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION | *good* |
|---|---|

This indicator reflects on the nursery's approach to children's wellbeing which underpins their ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of each individual. A clear focus on wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all children to be the best they can be and celebrates their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
- *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
- *Inclusion and equality*

- The importance of children's social and emotional wellbeing underpins the work of the nursery. Practitioners know children well and are aware of the varying needs of children and their families. A daily 'check in' enables children to share how they are feeling when they arrive at the nursery. This provides a time for practitioners to explore with children different emotions and provide the appropriate support as necessary. Most children play cooperatively. They are developing a sense of teamwork as they work together on tasks. When necessary, practitioners support children well to resolve low-level conflict.

- The inclusive and nurturing ethos is supporting children to feel safe and secure within the nursery. Their views are respected and valued. Children are aware that their views are listened to and acted upon when, for example, deciding the snack menu and selecting particular resources. There is scope to introduce children to the United Nations Rights of the Child in a relevant and meaningful way.

- Work continues to develop practitioners' knowledge and understanding of the various legislative frameworks relating to early learning and childcare. They continue to develop their confidence in using the 'Getting it right for every child' wellbeing indicators to identify children's needs. Practitioners should continue to introduce children to the language of the indicators through developmentally appropriate experiences. A system for recording information relating to children's care and welfare needs now needs to be established. These plans should be monitored and evaluated within the identified timescale and in partnership with parents.

- The nursery offers a flexible start and finish to the early learning and childcare nursery. It will be important for senior leaders and practitioners to continue to encourage parents to make full use of their early learning and childcare entitlement.

- Diversity is valued and celebrated. Children and their families, practitioners and visitors to the nursery are welcomed and treated fairly and with respect. Practitioners are aware of children who may experience barriers to their learning and work hard to ensure they are given full support to fully participate in their early learning and childcare experience. Practitioners are proactive in seeking support for children who may require additional support with their learning. They work well with partners to support children's care and learning needs. It will be important for practitioners to evaluate the impact of interventions to ensure positive outcomes for children.

## 3.2 SECURING CHILDREN'S PROGRESS — *good*

This indicator relates to the development and learning of babies, toddlers and young children. It requires clear understanding of early learning and development and pedagogy. It reflects the integrated way young children learn and the importance of experiences and development happening on an individual basis within a supportive, nurturing and stimulating environment. High quality early learning and childcare contributes significantly to enhancing children's progress and achievement as they grow and learn. It can benefit all children by closing the attainment gap and ensuring equity for all. It is about the holistic nature of development and learning ensuring these foundations are secure in order to achieve future attainment success. The themes are:

- *Progress in communication, early language, mathematics and health and wellbeing*
- *Children's progress over time*
- *Overall quality of children's achievement*
- *Ensuring equity for all children*

- Most children are making good progress in health and wellbeing. They are beginning to develop an awareness of emotions and how different situations impact on their feelings. They are developing independence skills well. Most children are developing confidence and good physical skills as they use a range of apparatus in the gym hall. They enjoy creating challenging constructions out of everyday objects during outdoor play. Children are learning to manage risk and know what to do to keep safe when using real-life tools at the woodwork bench and construction area. There is scope to increase opportunities for children to be involved in risk assessment in various play contexts and outings.

- In communication and early language, children are making good progress. They listen well during story time and when following instructions during physical activities. Most children are confident communicators and will engage readily in conversation with adults and their peers. Where appropriate, visual prompts are used effectively to convey messages and support children's communication skills. Most children demonstrate an interest in mark-making. Children will benefit from increased opportunities to 'write' for a purpose through relevant contexts. The majority of children are now able to recognise their name without a picture prompt. Children are developing a good awareness of rhyme and initial letter sounds through a range of relevant play experiences.

- Most children are making good progress, with a few making very good progress in early numeracy and mathematics. Most children count and recognise numbers to ten and a few are confident beyond. During woodwork and construction activities most children use relevant mathematical language. Children will benefit from being able to develop further their skills in money, shape and information handling.

- Children benefit from the range of interesting learning contexts provided to support their learning across the curriculum. Increasingly, they are becoming confident and independent learners. Practitioners know children well and use their observations and information from parents to build upon children's prior skills and knowledge. Practitioners have a good knowledge of child development and developmental milestones and use this information to influence the planning and assessment process.

- Achievements are celebrated well through praise, wall displays and award stickers.

Parents are encouraged to share their child's achievements from home through the 'magic moments' wall. There is scope for practitioners to extend the range of approaches to sharing children's achievements and learning with others.

- Practitioners' knowledge of children and their families enables them to identify possible barriers to learning. They work closely with families and partner agencies to offer appropriate support and guidance to help overcome these barriers. There is scope for making better use of data. Information gained from this will be helpful in identifying early intervention strategies and to ensure equity for all.

## SCHOOL CHOICE OF QI: 2.6 TRANSITION

- **Theme 1: Quality of support for children and their families**
- **Theme 2: Collaborative planning and delivery**
- **Theme 3: Continuity and progression in learning**

- Transition from home into the nursery is managed well. Helpful home visits prior to starting nursery give an opportunity for a two-way process of sharing information to ensure a smooth transition for children.

- The school makes very good efforts to ensure that parents of children in nursery are appropriately engaged in their children's transition into P1. Parents and children receive very helpful information about P1. They attend activity days and induction meetings to introduce them to the school and their new teacher. In addition, school practitioners make home visits to parents whose children attend nurseries other than Carmondean Nursery.

- The new electronic 'learning journal' which is being used in the nursery for the first time this year allows practitioners to record their observations of children's learning and share these with parents by email. This is well placed to form a very useful part of the nursery to P1 transition record this year. Its further development and continued use will help to support children's learning progression from nursery to P1.

- P6 pupils act as buddies for children in the nursery. They continue in this role as P7 buddies when the nursery children move into P1. This provides good support to children as they transition into P1.

- There are good transition arrangements for children with additional support needs, including the small number of children who are on shared placements. The school ensures that information on children's needs and progress are shared and jointly reviewed by practitioners in both establishments. Each child has an individual education plan which is jointly owned by each establishment.

## PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- Children are well behaved, motivated in their learning and have a strong say in how the school improves. Positive relationships between staff and children across the school and nursery result in a positive ethos for learning.

- Children experience a high quality of learning and teaching across the school and nursery.

- Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and work well with partner agencies to support children's learning.

- Collaborative working of all staff and the senior management team to lead change. Staff access a range of professional

## AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

- Continue to develop the curriculum to ensure progression in children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. In doing this, continue to raise aspirations about what children can achieve across the school and nursery.

- As planned, streamline the approach to assessment, monitoring and tracking children's progress across the school and nursery. Take steps to ensure that in doing this there is a clear focus on raising attainment for all.

- In the nursery, improve systems for recording children's care and welfare needs. This should include identifying and monitoring children's progress in this area.

## WHAT HAPPENS AT THE END OF THE INSPECTION?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. West Lothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.