

# Summarised inspection findings

**Braidburn School**

The City of Edinburgh Council

9 September 2025

# Key contextual information

Braidburn School is a non-denominational all-through school for children and young people with complex additional support needs. The school supports children and young people from across Edinburgh. Children and young people are placed at the school following assessment and agreement at the local authority’s Education Resource Group. Children and young people are transported to the school, predominantly using local authority transport arrangements. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 115 pupils across 15 classes.

The school and nursery leadership team has undergone recent staffing changes. The headteacher was appointed in December 2024 and is supported by two depute headteachers and three principal teachers. The school has 23 full time equivalent teachers and 45 full time equivalent support staff. They work very closely with allied health professionals who are located within the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good
<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>learning and engagement</li><li>quality of teaching</li><li>effective use of assessment</li><li>planning, tracking and monitoring</li></ul>	

- Staff, children and young people have worked well to refresh the school’s values. The values of happy, respected and independent are evident and visible throughout the school. Staff are beginning to use the school’s refreshed values in lessons to make these values relevant to learning and the life of the school. Staff know children and young people well and understand their individual and often complex support needs. They treat them with dignity and kindness. Staff, children and young people are welcoming and friendly to each other and to those who visit the school.
- Almost all staff demonstrate a clear commitment to children and young people’s rights, wellbeing and development. Overall, staff match activities appropriately to children and young people’s needs, interests and abilities. As a result, most children and young people are eager and motivated to learn. Most teachers deliver quality activities to ensure children engage positively in the learning. Senior leaders should now work with teachers to ensure they all deliver consistently high-quality learning experiences to all children and young people. This will help children and young people experience learning that is matched to their needs consistently well.
- Most teachers deliver learning experiences that are effective in developing children and young people’s life skills. They work well to develop skills including communication, employability, personal care, shopping and travel. Children and young people link and transfer their learning from these experiences increasingly well to whole school learning activities and school community events. Staff should continue to build more opportunities for children and young people to practice and demonstrate their skills in a growing range of real-life contexts.

- Teachers are effective in using signifiers and objects of reference to support children and young people's transitions across the school day. Almost all teachers use positive word choices consistently to help prepare children and young people for their next step in learning. Most teachers are effective in their use of questioning, silence, touch, eye contact, sign and body language when communicating with children and young people. Children and young people are able to prepare for and predict routines and settle quickly into learning, as a result.
- Most teachers have high expectations of children and young people. They support learners to have a sense of ambition, self-respect and to be the best version of themselves. Most teachers differentiate effectively and judge pace and challenge well within lessons. Senior leaders now need to work with teachers to ensure that children and young people's learning is differentiated consistently well across all classes.
- Staff use digital technologies very well across the school. This is helping almost all children and young people access a wide range of devices, software and hardware which supports them communicate and engage in learning. Staff use alternative and augmentative communication well to ensure all children and young people are active participants in all aspects of literacy across the school. Learners that require more specialist communication devices and programmes are highly effective in using these to communicate and support their learning, as a result. Overall, children and young people improve their communication through the effective use of British Sign Language (BSL) and other communication approaches, including signing, symbols, and eye control assistive technologies. They use symbols and short words and sentences to communicate choices and learning.
- Staff provide children and young people with very useful opportunities to play together. They ensure that play is purposeful and focuses on developing communication skills, fine motor skills, sensory development and social interaction. Staff support children and young people to access quality outdoor play spaces where they enjoy interacting with water and sand and resources that encourage physical activity. In doing so, children and young people benefit from opportunities to climb, swing and exercise while being supported to stay safe. Staff sensitively support children and young people to interact independently with friends or have alone time.
- Staff provide children and young people with a calm setting that, overall, helps children and young people regulate their emotions well during class and learning activities. They plan well-judged and effective relaxation activities at agreed moments of transition to reduce the likelihood of distressed or anxious behaviours escalating. Almost all staff know and understand the needs of children and young people very well. They have developed helpful positive behaviour support plans for every child and young person. Staff use agreed approaches, which they record in detailed plans, to identify early if a child or young person is becoming distressed or upset. Senior leaders and staff should continue to work together to review positive behaviour support plans. They should continue to develop approaches to meeting the needs of children and young people to reduce the overall number of recorded incidents.
- Staff work well together, with parents/carers and health professionals to assess children and young people's learning, physical needs and social needs. They gather useful evidence of children and young people's progress across a range of contexts. For example, staff use photographs, examples of work and parents'/carers' observations to inform their judgements about children and young people's small steps and progression in their learning. They form judgements particularly well in relation to how effectively children and young people make progress with their independence.
- Staff and health professionals work in partnership to undertake summative assessments that inform appropriately individualised education programmes (IEPs) for all children and young people. Teachers ensure that IEPs provide a helpful overview of the children and young

people's strengths and areas for further development. This helps teachers design learning for children and young people that requires more specialist approaches beyond the planned curriculum. Teachers should continue to improve further the targets within IEPs. They should ensure that they are measurable, evaluated fully and that children and young people understand their targets where appropriate. Staff need to be clear on the specific and intended skills that children and young people aim to develop as a result of the IEP. This will support teachers to assess how well children and young people are working towards reaching their intended outcomes. It should also support them to identify the interventions that have the most impact.

- In the senior phase, a few teachers work effectively with other schools to moderate evidence of young people's learning in Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Qualifications (NQs). These teachers develop a better understanding of national standards at National 1 and National 2 level, as a result. Senior leaders should continue to support all teachers at the senior phase to work with peers from other schools to moderate evidence of young people's learning. Senior leaders need to strengthen the use of systematic moderation activities across the senior phase and broad general education (BGE). This will help teachers improve their confidence in making professional judgements on how well children and young people are progressing with their learning over time.
- All teachers plan children and young people's learning consistently well using a range of long-term and medium-term plans. They plan appropriately using foundation milestones and Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Most children experience learning that is matched well to their needs. Subject specialists who work across all stages of the BGE develop relevant and purposeful progressive plans for physical education, food technology, art and design, and music. Teachers plan appropriately for other curriculum areas using an interdisciplinary approach. This provides children and young people opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills in different learning contexts. Teachers ensure that children and young people experience learning in almost all curriculum areas with an important focus on communication and life skills that they will need as they grow and develop.
- Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to develop systems that allow improved tracking and monitoring of children and young people's attainment and achievement of targets across the school. Senior leaders should continue to track and monitor using other useful data, such as the number of incidents of challenging behaviour. This will support them to understand the impact of interventions and if they are leading to improved outcomes.

## 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 and young people. 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

#### BGE

- Across the school, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. All children and young people have significant additional support needs. Almost all children and young people at the BGE are attaining at levels of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) appropriate to their strengths and needs. Almost all children and young people achieve targets set within their IEPs. With more challenge in their learning, a few children and young people are capable of achieving more.

#### Senior Phase

- At the senior phase, young people are developing appropriate literacy skills and achieving a wide range of awards. For example, young people are achieving SQA awards at level 1 and level 2 in areas such as recognising signs in the community and interacting with others in the community. Staff should continue to support young people to develop and apply these important literacy and communication skills. They should ensure that young people are achieving awards at as high a level as possible.
- At the senior phase, most young people are using numeracy and maths well to develop appropriate skills for life after school. Young people are attaining National Qualifications such as handling money and information handling at level 1 and level 2 awards. Staff should continue to identify ways to help all young people at the senior phase develop and apply numeracy skills within relevant contexts that will support their transition to adult life.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children and young people are making good progress in literacy and English. Children and young people make positive progress in developing their communication approaches.

#### Listening and talking

- Children and young people are building important communication skills very well to help them prepare for their adult life. Across the BGE, children and young people make positive progress in developing their listening and talking skills. They use their preferred modes of communication and show progress from prior levels. A few make very positive progress. Children give shared attention to a range of sensory stimuli, objects, and people. They use symbols or words to communicate appropriately in line with their strengths and needs. They are developing well their ability to take turns, share attention and respond appropriately during discussions.

#### Reading

- Most children and young people make positive progress in developing their pre-reading. Their reading skills show progress from prior levels. Children and young people working at

milestones show an interest, respond to familiar characters and rhymes, and enjoy exploring a storybook. Children and young people explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together appropriate to their developmental stage. Children and young people would benefit from more experiences of reading for real life application of skills.

## **Writing**

- Children and young people develop their fine motor and prewriting skills well. They use their hands to explore and manipulate objects well appropriate to their developmental stage. They engage in tactile and sensory activities, and play experiences with increasing control. They use fine motor skills to interact and mark making using digital applications. They hold, grasp and release tools for writing and demonstrate control of preferred tools for writing and preferred hand. Children and young people who need to use alternative and augmentative communication devices to generate short messages do this effectively.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Most children and young people are developing well their understanding of number, appropriate to their strengths and needs. Children and young people count and order numbers. They successfully complete addition, subtraction and multiplication calculations. A few children and young people are developing well their understanding of money. As they progress through the school, they successfully transfer money skills to real life situations such as shopping and paying for items. For example, they cost, purchase and sell items in the school tuck shop. Children and young people are identifying shapes in their environment and sorting these shapes by their properties. A few are organising information by creating simple bar graphs. Children and young people across the school would benefit from further opportunities to develop and apply numeracy and mathematics skills within meaningful contexts.

## **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders have a sound understanding about the progress of children and young people over time. They collaborate with teachers to review regularly children and young people's individual plans and to monitor and track progress. Across the school, almost all children and young people are making good progress over time.
- Overall, senior leaders use data well to show the range and number of National Qualifications for young people at the senior phase. They use this data appropriately to understand patterns over time. Young people working at the senior phase are attaining well across a range of subjects, as a result. Young people are completing successfully SQA National Qualifications unit awards at level 1 and level 2. A few young people at the senior phase have the capacity to attain more qualifications. Senior leaders should continue to interrogate this data and ensure that all young people are attaining as highly as possible.
- The work of the headteacher, staff and partners is resulting in most children and young people having positive patterns of attendance. For example, the headteacher engages well with families and with allied health professionals to support children and young people to attend school. The headteacher has a good understanding of the health, social and emotional challenges children and young people face which can impact upon their attendance. She works with the family support worker and other agencies to support children and young people access learning who are not able to maintain regular attendance. The family worker works well to help targeted children and young people increase attendance over time.

## **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Children and young people's participation and success in personal achievement activities is recognised and celebrated. They achieve a range of skills as they progress through their learning pathways and enjoy celebrating this success with the wider school community. Young



people in S5 and S6 take on meaningful leadership roles. They are developing their confidence and sense of responsibility well as a result of these opportunities. Senior leaders and staff should consider approaches to supporting children and young people who are not yet in S5 and S6 take on more responsibility for the life and work of the school.

- Young people at the later stages of secondary work towards and achieve the accessible Heritage Heroes Award. As they work towards achieving the award they develop further their capacity to plan, investigate and engage with history, heritage and archaeology. They share what they learn and consider the skills they have developed. Senior leaders and staff should now consider ways to provide an increasing range of activities for more children and young people to practise their skills or gain accreditation. Staff should track the impact of these activities to ensure skills children and young people develop are progressive.
- Children and young people are building confidence in teamwork using their communication skills effectively in other contexts. For example, they deepen their understanding of the community through visits to local services and shops. These trips support children and young people to develop their confidence in accessing busier community spaces. Children and young people are developing well their understanding of risk assessment and the importance of being organised.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders have a strong understanding of the additional support needs of the children and young people and their socio-economic circumstances. Senior leaders and staff provide equitable support which helps children, young people and families to overcome any potential barriers to learning, including the cost of the school day and personal family circumstances.
- Senior leaders use a majority of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to employ a family support worker. The worker liaises closely with families to make sure their children and young people can fully participate in education. This has resulted in increased family engagement for targeted children and young people. Senior leaders use the remainder of PEF to reduce barriers to learning or address costs associated with the school day. For example, senior leaders and staff ensure trips or activities are provided free and accessible to all. This helps children and young people at risk of missing out to take part in all school activities.
- Staff and partners are effective in supporting young people to prepare for life beyond school, including identifying potential post-school destinations. Almost all young people move into sustained positive destinations when they leave school. Senior leaders and staff should work with families to consider longer transitions for post school transition opportunities, where appropriate. This will help young people to apply and experience learning in different contexts earlier to prepare them better for leaving school.



## Other relevant evidence

- All children and young people receive their entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education (PE). Staff provide all children and young people with accessible, planned, progressive and meaningful physical education programmes.
- Children and young people do not have access to modern language lessons in the school as part of a 1 + 2 approach. In most classes children and young people have opportunities to learn British Sign Language (BSL) and another signing programme. These approaches do help children and young people to communicate better with staff and peers and engage with learning activities. Senior leaders should work with teachers to develop a relevant, progressive and purposeful approach to modern languages that aligns closely with children and young people's additional support needs.
- Nutritional Requirements for Food and Drink in Schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020, apply to food and drinks provided to young people in schools. All staff must be aware of these regulations and understand how they apply across the school day when providing food and drinks to children and young people. For example, biscuits and confectionery provided as snacks can be high in calories providing little to no nutritional value. Frequent consumption can have a potentially damaging impact on dental health due to their sugar content. Sweets, in particular, are not permitted under the standard for confectionery and do not align with the ethos of a health-promoting school under the school's duty within the schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007.
- It is recommended that senior leaders incorporate all areas of food-based activity and learning into a school food policy. This should support them have a consistent approach to learning, and the application of the Nutritional Regulations 2020 across all aspects of school life.

## 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.