Summarised inspection findings

Spark of Genius Caledonian School Glengarnock

19 March 2019

Key contextual information

Spark of Genius Caledonian School Glengarnock is an all-through special school which is part of the educational services offered by Spark of Genius. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 56 with 16 children in the primary classes and a further 40 in the secondary classes.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are: ■ learning and engagement ■ quality of teaching ■ effective use of assessment ■ planning, tracking and monitoring	

■ The school's shared vision of 'supporting learners to reach their maximum potential and to leave school as happy, well rounded, confident individuals', underpins all aspects of the work of the school. Positive relationships between children, young people and staff are evident in both the primary and secondary settings. In pre-inspection questionnaires, all children within the primary department feel that staff encourage them to be the best they can be. Almost all children and young people say they enjoy their learning. In the secondary setting, the majority of young people enjoy school and feel that they are getting on well with their work. In the majority of observed lessons across the school, the majority of children engaged appropriately in learning.

■ Staff know the children and young people well and offer appropriate support. They take good account of each child's or young person's additional support needs. For example, by adapting the classroom environment and curriculum to meet individual needs and aspirations. The development of nurturing approaches through recent staff training is beginning to complement and enhance the school's inclusive ethos. Strategies to support children and young people who become distressed are effective. These supports are enabling children and young people to return to class and re-engage with learning within an appropriate timescale. The importance of children's and young people's rights is recognised by staff. The school should improve the consistency of children's and young people's learning experiences across the school including strengthening their understanding of their rights.

■ In the majority of lessons, most children and young people are appropriately challenged in their learning relative to their stage of development. Children and young people have opportunities to work individually, with a partner and in small groups. A range of learning environments, including outdoors spaces, are used to support and enhance learning. A few lessons are well-structured and engaging. In best practice teachers explanations are clear. Skilled questioning techniques are used well in a few lessons. There is some good use of digital technology, with children and young people responding well to these opportunities. The school should continue, as planned, to develop the use of digital technology to help meet additional support needs. A heavy reliance on commercially produced resources is limiting opportunities for children and young people to develop their skills across a range of curricular areas. Limited opportunities are provided for children and young people to lead their learning. Staff should continue to develop creative teaching approaches to promote children's and young people's curiosity, independence and confidence.

- The school provides opportunities for children and young people to develop links between their learning and skills for work. For example, the popular café run by the primary setting is supporting children's development of skills and attributes across the four capacities. Young people in the senior phase are developing their skills for work through rural, automotive, construction and digital media classes. Participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards Scheme is enabling young people to contribute to the wider community.

- The school should review curriculum timetabling to minimise disruption to learning and teaching in classes. In a significant number of lessons, the frequent movement of staff and children and young people in and out of the classroom is impacting on the quality of learning and teaching taking place. Transitions between lessons should be developed further to enable children and young people to settle to learning more quickly. Protocols should be established across staff teams to ensure a consistently purposeful learning environment is maintained in all lessons.

- The views of children and young people are sought through the use of questionnaires and the pupil leadership team (PLT). In school questionnaires, all children in the primary setting feel that staff talk to them regularly about how to improve their learning. In the secondary setting, the majority of children feel they have a say in making the way they learn in school better.

- Upon placement at the school, all children and young people undergo a six week period of initial assessment. This provides staff with a valuable opportunity to get to know each child's and young person's strengths, and additional support needs, well. Staff use this time to build positive relationships with each child and young person and this results in new starts settling quickly into the school.

- All children's and young people's emotional needs are assessed on a termly basis using standardised assessments. These provide detailed information as to how well children and young people are coping within the school setting. Staff use this information sufficiently well to develop and deploy interventions to support children and young people to develop their resilience in a range of settings. The assessment profiles for each child and young person are monitored and tracked to identify where they are making progress. The school should now more robustly analyse this information to identify which interventions are most successful and how they can improve how the school supports children and young people.

- A recently introduced assessment tool is used to assess children and young people's prior learning. Teachers use this information to identify what children and young people can do, and any gaps in their learning. Teachers have made a promising start in using this resource to support children and young people with their learning needs but, it is too early for this to have had any significant impact on planning for learning and teaching. Teachers should develop further their skills in assessment is for learning and professional judgements to support further improvements in planned learning and teaching.

- The school has developed a three year curriculum overview for the broad general education (BGE). This details the broad areas of study each class will cover each term. The curriculum overview is supported by a topic map which identifies the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence which will be covered in each topic. Teachers monitor and track what each child and young person has been taught against these experiences and outcomes. This tracking of children's and young people's progress needs to be developed further to provide meaningful information on what children and young people can do. This will support teachers to make more accurate judgements on how well children and young people are progressing in their learning, and to plan more effectively building on children's and young people's prior learning. Further support for teachers to develop their moderation skills will

continue to improve their understanding of shared expectations and standards for children's and young people's work.

■ The play-based curricular overview for the primary nurture class provides a helpful guide for teachers to plan activities which cover a range of relevant experiences and outcomes, which meet children's needs. This planning is proving successful in engaging children meaningfully. Children in the primary nurture class are making good progress in developing their emotional health and wellbeing.

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 organisation.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- ■ attainment in literacy and numeracy
- ■ attainment over time
- ■ overall quality of learners' achievement
- ■ equity for all learners

Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

■ At the time of the inspection, there were 56 children and young people attending the school ranging from primary 4 to the final year of secondary education. All children and young people have previously experienced challenges in accessing education which has impacted upon their levels of attainment prior to their placement at the school. Overall, the data presented by the school demonstrates that most children and young people are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy from prior levels of attainment.

■ Children in the BGE are being offered experiences closely aligned to their chronological age. Examples of work provided by the school evidence that children are working successfully towards achieving first or second level. Teaching staff are beginning to use the benchmarks to track progress and to support their professional judgements. Evidence gained from inspection activity highlights that the levels achieved by most children and young people are below the levels provided by the school. Increased participation in moderation activity across the school and in partnership with other schools would further support teaching staff to improve their confidence in making accurate professional judgements.

Literacy and language
Listening and talking

■ Almost all children and young people at the BGE are consistently able to communicate effectively with the teaching and support staff across a range of contexts. Almost all children and young people take part in group discussions and are able to discuss activities they enjoy. They can express their views and ideas with confidence. Almost all children and young people with additional barriers to listening and talking are supported effectively to communicate within the school community. The Enterprise Café offers children opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills within a dynamic environment.

Reading

■ The school encourages all children and young people to engage with a range of texts. Staff support most children well to read short stories, graphic novels and extended texts for enjoyment. Most young people in the secondary setting are able to read and follow instructions appropriate to their level. The majority of children within the primary setting are fully supported to read sentences and instructions to effectively engage positively with learning. Staff read to children to promote positive experiences of reading and to expose children to a range of texts. A minority of children are able to successfully read and follow instructions well across a range of contexts. Overall the support offered to the children and young people is appropriate to their level.

Writing

■ Overall, children and young people need to develop their writing skills across a wider range of contexts. Word processing programmes support children and young people to create texts for a variety of purposes, for example, writing menus, short stories, personal experiences and instructions. At first level, the majority of children are able to write in short sentences, often with adult support. Most children and young people attempt to write and spell commonly used words correctly and engage with the school's spelling programmes. At second level, children and young people are beginning to write extended texts. They are developing their ability to write imaginatively with reduced adult support. Almost all children and young people improve their spelling and reading ages after placement at the school.

Numeracy and mathematics
Number, money and measurement

■ Within the primary setting, the majority of children are developing their understanding of money through the practical application of their learning in the weekly café. They can total bills and work out how much change to give customers. Within the secondary setting, young people can use the common units of measure. They can measure the perimeter of simple shapes and calculate the area of compound shapes. By senior phase, young people can apply their number and measurement skills in real life situations in the construction and mechanics workshops. Staff should continue to develop opportunities for children and young people to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum and in real life contexts.

Attainment over time

■ The numbers of children and young people at the school each year means that data related to attainment tells a limited story. The clear focus on individual children's and young people's needs is resulting in them significantly increasing their attendance from their previous placements. There is a clear focus on skills for work. This ensures young people in the senior phase learn valuable skills which support them well to move on to college or work placements after leaving the school. All young people in their senior phase for session 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 achieved a national course award in English and mathematics. Opportunities for full course awards was impacted upon negatively by a change of care placement for a few young people. In 2017/18 three young people achieved National 4 qualifications in automotive skills. All young people currently assessing their senior phase are working towards a range of National 2, National 3, National 4 or National 5 accredited courses in mathematics, English, automotive skills, creative digital media, computer game design, construction skills, social subjects, hospitality, rural skills and environmental science.

■ Information provided by the school shows there has been an overall increase in attainment of full course awards at both National 2 and National 3 over the last three sessions. At National 2 level there were no full awards in 2015/16 or 2016/17; in 2017/18 there were nine full National 2 awards. At National 3 level there were three full awards in 2015/2016, there was two full awards in 2016/2017 and there were seven full awards in 2017/2018.

■ Full awards at National 4 and National 5 level have decreased across the past three sessions. In 2015/2016 there were 25 full National 4 awards to 19 in 2016/2017 and then 11 in 2017/2018. At National 5 level there was a decrease from four in 2015/2016 to five in 2016/2017 and then to zero in 2017/2018.

Overall Quality of Learners' Achievement

■ Young people achieve a range of accredited wider achievement awards such as ASDAN, John Muir, Duke of Edinburgh and Software Training Scotland awards. School awards are used to recognise children's and young people's participation in activities such as golf, fishing, music, football, swimming and for their attendance at school. A few children and young people

obtained 100% attendance across 2017/18. Wider use of accredited awards would further recognise the personal achievements of children and young people.

■ Wider achievements are recognised by the school. In session 2017/18 36 children and young people received a range of School Achievement Awards in relation to attendance, sports, or the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. The school needs to develop a process which supports senior managers to more effectively monitor and track how well young people attain at the senior phase. The school needs to use this information to better ensure young people attain as many qualifications and awards as possible.

Equity

■ Almost all children and young people demonstrate positive interactions around the school building and grounds. Commendably, from the school's focus on developing children's and young people's skills for work led to all school leavers in session 2017/18 moving on to either college or employment. Children's and young people's attendance at school increases from their previous educational placements as a result of their being placed at Caledonian School. The rigorous recording of children arriving late for school or being away from class activity would provide a more accurate record of attendance and engagement within the school.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – wellbeing

■ Transition planning is effective in ensuring children and young people are supported well to integrate successfully into the school. An initial assessment period allows staff to spend meaningful time getting to know each child or young person. Staff build positive relationships with children and young people and this supports them to feel valued and an important part of the school. Children and young people develop friendships with their peers and they are supportive of each other. The school's focus on nurturing approaches supports children and young people to feel included and cared for. This results in children and young people settling well into the school and improving their attendance at education in comparison to previous placements.

■ The wellbeing indicators are used well to review children's and young people's progress at review meetings. Staff should now look to develop the language of the wellbeing indicators more fully across the work of the school. Consideration could also be given to developing further children's and young people's knowledge and understanding of their rights as described in the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child.

■ Staff have recently undertaken professional learning in trauma and attachment and this is helping them to have an enhanced understanding of children's and young people's additional support needs. The school has developed an approach to more effectively support children and young people to understand their emotions and feelings and to self-regulate their actions when they experience difficulties. This is resulting in fewer incidents where children and young people become distressed. In the few incidences where children and young people find it difficult to self-regulate staff are able to take appropriate action to support them to calm down and re-engage promptly with their learning.

■ Children and young people feel they are listened to and that they can speak to staff about personal issues. They are included at all review meetings and are able to influence any decisions made about their future. The school responds well to children's and young people's aspirations by ensuring the curriculum is adapted to meet their needs. Children and young people feel the pupil council is effective in representing their interests.

■ The school uses the local community to enhance children's and young people's learning. Visits to local early learning and childcare centres and other community facilities is building their confidence and their understanding of themselves as respectful and responsible citizens. A few children and young people have volunteered to help develop a community fairy forest.

■ HM Inspectors spoke to a few parents who speak very highly of the support offered in developing their child's or young person's wellbeing. The guidance staff pass on to parents and families is impacting positively in helping families to communicate better with their child or young person.

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.