

# Summarised inspection findings

**Cornhill School**

Aberdeen City Council

26 November 2024

## Key contextual information

Cornhill Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the Cornhill area of Aberdeen City. At the time of inspection, the school roll consisted of 420 children across 16 classes. The headteacher has been in post for 12 years and is supported by two depute headteachers and one principal teacher.

Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile one to four. Children's attendance is in line with the national average. The school reported that 30% of children require additional support in their learning. A significant number of children require significant support in their learning and 29% have English as an Additional language (EAL).

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Staff and children demonstrate the school values; Respectful, Focused, Self-Motivated, Resilient and Inquisitive very well in class and in the playground. Children are very proud of their school and appreciate the staff that work there. Staff have a very nurturing and sensitive approach in working with children. This results in engaged learners who can manage their emotions well. All staff develop positive relationships and behaviour with children. For example, children reflect on positive behaviours of others in their classroom and nominate them for a 'yellow slip'. Children are kind and generous with this feedback. Staff use trauma informed approaches and provide quiet spaces with distraction packs for children to regulate their behaviour. In addition, pupil support staff help children to build their self-regulation skills very well. Senior leaders track these interventions and analyse instances of when children need additional support to create risk assessments and adjust the support provided. These interventions ensure that there are very few times that behaviour impacts negatively on the classroom environment.
- Senior leaders and all staff have established a very positive, nurturing, calm and inclusive learning environment. Staff know children very well. All children who require additional support with learning have highly effective supports in place that allow them to make very good progress in a variety of learning spaces. As a next step, staff should provide greater levels of challenge for higher attaining children.
- Staff encourage children to be responsible and contribute to the wider life of the school. For example, Primary 6 'buddies' provide support in the playground, helping younger children to find friends and play safely. Children who receive training and first aid instruction as a Russell Anderson Development School (RADS) Young Leader deliver coaching sessions for younger children. Through this, children build their confidence and leadership skills very well.
- In most classes, children lead learning effectively. For example, in Primary 7 trios of children confidently sit in the 'hotseat' and lead question and answers sessions for their peers. Children

through house groups learn about children rights and share their learning at assemblies. This results in most children being able to talk about different rights and what this means in their lives. Senior leaders should continue with plans to further embed rights into everyday learning experiences.

- Almost all teachers plan and deliver very motivating and engaging lessons where children are excited about learning and are keen to discuss their achievements with adults. Almost all children are clear about the purpose of their learning, and they use 'steps for success' consistently across the school. This enables teachers to provide high quality oral or written feedback in almost all lessons. In addition, in most classes, children peer assess their work and provide useful feedback that helps improve their learning. Almost all teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. They use skilled questioning to develop children's higher order thinking skills. For example, in numeracy children explore and discuss their thinking and how they achieved their answer. Most children use technology to engage with learning effectively to reinforce and consolidate their work.
- Staff use the playground very successfully to provide opportunities to learn outdoors. This is helping to motivate and engage children in learning. In a few classes children use the outdoors to learn about sustainability. For example, a few children investigated how they could protect trees and woodlands.
- Children from P1 to P3 experience a highly effective play environment. Children receive a well-balanced variety of adult and child-directed experiences that supports progression of learning through play. Play is an integral part of learning and teaching. Children across the school experience 'play projects'. This is beginning to develop their creativity skills.
- Staff provide very effective specialised support for identified children in a variety of learning spaces in the school. They include children who require significant support with their learning very well in the life of the school. The leadership team use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to engage the services of a few partners who meet a range of needs well. The support from these partners helps several children self-regulate their emotions. They support a few children and their families to maximise attendance at school. Children value the support they receive from RADS, Adventure Aberdeen, and the school chaplain. These partnerships are enhancing children's learning experiences.
- The leadership team have developed a yearly overview of assessment which is integrated well into teachers planning. They have agreed a range of formative and diagnostic assessments to measure children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Most teachers share the outcome of assessment information with children. As a result, most children know their next steps in literacy and numeracy and can set their own targets to improve their learning. Staff use assessment information very well to plan learning across the curriculum. They use progression pathways in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing to ensure children build on their prior learning as they move through the school. As planned, staff should now underpin children's learning in other curricular areas with progression pathways based on the experiences and outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). This will support staff to identify progression in learning across subjects outwith literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Staff use a range of diagnostic assessments to meet childrens' needs. They work very effectively with a wide range of advice from other agencies to help plan learning for children who require additional support in their learning. This includes autism outreach services, speech and language services, English as an Additional Language services and a charity to support social and emotional difficulties. As a result, senior leaders and staff have a very good understanding of the varying needs of different cohorts of children. Together they use this

knowledge well to inform interventions to support children. They have created a range of enhanced interventions across the school to help meet the wide range of needs. These allow children to engage successfully in learning alongside their peers as far as possible.

- The leadership team has developed very effective and robust ways to track and monitor children's attainment across the school. Staff carefully track the attainment of all children on a termly basis. This includes those who are care experienced and those who require additional support with their learning. In addition, for a few children, staff review their progress every few weeks as required. This ensures teachers are responsive to their needs and staff maximise progress in learning. The leadership team clearly record decisions made to support and challenge children and agree timescales for interventions. They have taken positive steps to accelerate the attainment of those children adversely affected by their socio-economic circumstances. In addition, the leadership team closely measure the impact of interventions to ensure they raise attainment. In doing this, they ensure the learning needs of all are met very well, that all children achieve success and are included well in school.

## 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. An area for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Almost all children who require additional support in their learning are making very good progress towards their targets. Overall, the school adds value to the attainment of children as they move through the school.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are articulate and speak with confidence to adults and their peers. At early level, most children are beginning to communicate with increased confidence. Almost all children listen well to everyday instructions and prompts. They respond appropriately and share their ideas well. By first level, most children communicate clearly. They engage with and listen well to others. Almost all children working at second level share their ideas and opinions confidently by asking and answering a range of questions. They enjoy taking part in class discussions, making arguments for and against interesting issues. Most children demonstrate a confident use of pace, tone and persuasive language to present their ideas and opinions. Older children would welcome more opportunities to apply their skills to a wider range of purposes and to a variety of audiences.

### Reading

- Children at all stages demonstrate enthusiasm for reading and enjoy accessing class library areas. They select texts across a range of genre regularly. Children who have achieved early level read familiar words with confidence. At first level, most children talk confidently about their favourite authors and genres. They explain their text choices with confidence and enthusiasm. At second level, most children use a range of reading strategies to demonstrate understanding and analysis of texts. They read fluently, expressively and with understanding. They respond accurately to a range of questions about texts. They can identify and comment on techniques authors use to engage or persuade the reader.

### Writing

- At early level, most children form letters legibly and leave a space between words. They use capital letters and full stops in simple sentences effectively. Children at first level, plan and organise ideas and information using appropriate formats. They are beginning to use interesting vocabulary and to structure and sequence their ideas well. At second level, most children write regularly in a variety of genres and for a range of purposes. They use confidently a range of language techniques to enhance their writing and engage the reader. Across the school, teachers should continue to support children to improve the effective use of punctuation and grammar.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Most children who have achieved early level order numbers, count forwards and backwards to 50, and can identify a missing number in a sequence successfully. At first level most children confidently identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three or four digits. They round to the nearest 10 and 100 and use this to estimate calculations. Most children compare the size of fractions and place simple fractions in order. Most children working towards second level have a good understanding of place value. They use a range of strategies to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. They are confident using their knowledge of common fractions, decimals and percentages. Across the school, children have a good understanding of numeracy in real-life contexts.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Most children who have achieved early level can identify, describe and create symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. At first level, most children confidently use positional language associated with direction and know that a right angle is 90 degrees. At second level, most children recognise and name three-dimensional objects and use mathematical language to describe their properties. They are confident in calculating the perimeter and area of simple two-dimensional shapes.

## **Information handling**

- At early level, most children successfully use their knowledge of colour and size to match and sort items, which they display in bar graphs. At first and second level, most children extract key information and answer questions from a range of graphs and tables. At second level most children confidently describe a range of graphs and how they can be used to present different forms of information.
- At second level, most children are confident in their understanding of chance and probability. They conduct simple experiments involving chance and communicate their predictions and findings using the vocabulary of probability well. They show a good understanding of the use of probability in real life contexts.

## **Attainment over time**

- Overall, the school's attendance is in line with the national average. Most children attend school 90% of the time. Overall, the leadership team can show improvement in attendance for those children whose absences fall below 90%. The leadership team and staff monitor attendance regularly and follow Aberdeen City Council policy on contacting parents regarding absence from school. A home school liaison officer attends the school termly to review attendance and offer support to families. The leadership team have begun to make parents aware of the impact of time lost from school has on attainment. The leadership team work well with a few families to encourage attendance at school using interventions such as social work supports and the breakfast club. In addition, the full-time family support worker funded by PEF, helps support families to maximise attendance. The senior leadership team should continue to monitor and restrict the use of part time timetables.
- Over the last three years, school data demonstrates an improving picture in children's progress over time. Senior leaders track effectively progress over time and plan interventions for those who require additional support with learning. Interventions planned by senior leaders and staff are bespoke to individual children. Staff can demonstrate a positive impact of interventions on attainment in particular for children with barriers to their learning, including those children who require significant support in their learning. The leadership team and staff are able to show accelerated progress for those children adversely affected by their socio-economic circumstances.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Through the work of staff, children, parents and the wider community, children's wider achievements are promoted and celebrated. These include Inter School Rotary Quiz, Maths Enterprise Challenge, The Big Sing and Bikeability Level 1 and 2. Children are very proud of their own achievements and those of their peers and play an active role in promoting and supporting positive change. They identify and lead their own initiatives, such as P6 buddies, Litter initiative and Travel Plan focus group. Older children develop strong leadership skills through opportunities such as P7 Prefects, P7 RADS (Russel Anderson Development School) Young Leaders and whole school enterprise projects. Staff continually monitor the uptake of extracurricular activities on offer, using this information well to ensure no child misses out.
- Children in P6 and P7 link their wider achievements to skills gained as part of a local authority pilot. As planned, staff should continue to support all children to identify and understand the skills they are developing through participation in activities.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff understand the social-economic context of the school community and know children and families very well. They make very good use of this information when planning the use of PEF. The headteacher consults with staff and parents, through parent council meetings and newsletters, to agree how to spend the PEF allocation.
- Currently the headteacher uses PEF to provide additional staffing to support targeted groups of children, such as a full-time family liaison worker, counselling blocks, an outdoor learning company and Adventure Aberdeen. Staff carry out assessments to measure the impact on learners, of the work undertaken by these initiatives. This monitoring shows that almost all children are developing skills in self-regulation and are having meaningful opportunities to address their social and emotional needs. As a result, children's attendance is improving and they are engaged more in learning.



## Other relevant evidence

- Children access two hours of quality physical education (PE) each week delivered by a PE specialist teacher. Teachers plan children's learning in physical education using learning pathways linked to CfE experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks. As a result, children experience progression in their learning of physical skills as they move through the school.
- Staff teach children French using a progression pathway to ensure they build their skills as they move through the school. Throughout the day, a few teachers include simple classroom instructions, praise and greetings in French. However, children in P5 to P7 are not receiving their entitlement to a second language.
- Children receive their entitlement to Religious Education in line with national expectations.

## 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.