

# Summarised inspection findings

**East Craigs Primary School**

The City of Edinburgh Council

21 November 2023

## Key contextual information

East Craigs Primary School is a non-denominational primary school which serves the area of East Craigs to the northwest of Edinburgh. The school roll in March 2023 was 413 organised across 16 classes. The leadership team consists of two deputy headteachers and a principal teacher. One deputy headteacher has been in post for four years and the other took up post in August 2022. The current headteacher has been in post for four years. There have been significant changes to the leadership team over the last few years. Most children live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles seven to ten. Overall, attendance is in line with the national average.

East Craigs Primary School nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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

- Senior leaders consulted staff, children and parents recently to review and agree the school's vision and aims. They link these to the values of respect, kindness, inclusive and safe. Staff display these around the school. Children who model school values well receive a 'Team East Craig' award at assembly. Most children can talk about the values, and a few can relate them to their learning in class. A few staff refer to or use the values and class charters in their daily learning and teaching.
- The headteacher, two deputy headteachers and the principal teacher are beginning to focus on improving outcomes for all children. In recent years there have been significant changes to the leadership team. This has had a negative impact on their ability to sustain change over time. Led by the headteacher, the leadership team should review the scope and implementation of their remit, roles and responsibilities. This should support them to have a sharper focus on key priorities for improvement. This would include improving the quality of learning, teaching and assessment and raising attainment across the school. There is a need for the leadership team to have a stronger presence across the school to ensure high standards of learning and behaviour. The headteacher should ensure a clearer more focussed and sustained approach to developing approaches to anti-bullying across the school.
- Children are learning about the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and staff display charters in each class. Staff need to use this work to raise expectations of the standard and quality of children's work, behaviour and relationships. They should work

together, and with parents and children, to establish a shared understanding of what is an appropriate classroom culture and ethos.

- Senior leaders gather the views of staff to inform self-evaluation activity and plan for change. They have made an early start to involving parents and children in identifying areas for improvement. For example, senior leaders have introduced 'bonus ball' learning conversations with children across the school. They are beginning to use the reflective questions in 'How good is OUR school?' to gather children's views on their learning and the life of the school. It is important that the leadership team share clearly with children how these conversations are contributing to school improvement. They should now build on this work and continue to include more children in making decision about school improvement.
- The leadership team have recently created an improvement calendar which outlines the range of approaches used to evaluate the quality of children's learning experiences. They visit classes to observe children's experiences and have discussions with teachers regarding children's attainment, progress and achievements. This is not yet improving outcomes for learners. The leadership team, following recent sampling of children's work have worked in partnership with teachers to produce a 'use of jotters' policy. The leadership team should ensure that class observations lead to identifying and sharing good practice which supports further improvement. Overall, the leadership team should ensure all monitoring activity results in improved experiences and outcomes for learners across the school.
- Senior leaders and staff have found it challenging to embed and sustain rigorous approaches to self-evaluation for self-improvement due to COVID-19 and changes to the leadership team. They now need to take a more rigorous and consistent approach to evaluating the work of the school. This will help build a more accurate picture of strengths and areas for improvement. School improvement plans should include measurable outcomes and timescales which demonstrate how children's progress will improve. They should ensure that all improvements lead to positive outcomes and experiences for children.
- The headteacher and the whole school team should now increase the pace of change. The headteacher should now provide stronger strategic leadership to the work of the school. She should ensure a relentless focus on raising attainment. The leadership team should continue to work with teachers to develop approaches to improve their understanding of learning and teaching. This session, staff have further developed their 'learning and teaching toolkit'. More needs done to ensure this toolkit impacts on improving the quality of learning and teaching across the school.
- Children have a few opportunities to take on leadership roles and activities across the school including as digital leaders and participating in sustainability and children's rights committees. At P7, children can be a house captain and buddy for younger children. For most children, leadership activities are not yet a regular feature of their life at school. Children are eager and would benefit from, more opportunities to enhance and improve the work of the school. In doing so, children can develop their leadership skills and increase their sense of value to the school community. This will ensure that children have increased opportunities to apply their learning and skills in real-life contexts.
- All teachers engage in an annual professional review and development meeting. They link their professional learning targets to the General Teaching Council Scotland Professional Standards. A few staff across the school have embraced leadership roles. This includes as a digital leader, literacy coordinator and through support for learning teams. Teachers should develop further their collaborative working to ensure that together they lead change and improvement.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- In a few classes, children are engaged and enjoy learning and teaching appropriate to their learning needs. This is not consistent across the school. In most classes, children experience whole class lessons. As a result, most children are not actively engaged in their learning as lessons are often not at the right level of challenge for all. Teachers should now ensure that they differentiate learning and teaching appropriately. The headteacher and staff have reviewed the learning, teaching and assessment policy and are using The City of Edinburgh Teachers Charter. There is a need for the leadership team to continue to work with staff to develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching across the school.
- In a few classes, teachers provide opportunities for children to talk about their learning with their peers. They use questioning well to check for understanding and involve children in discussions on how to be successful in their learning. In these classes, children engage well in tasks and work well in pairs and in groups to learn together. However, this is not consistent practice across the school. In most classes, children are not always clear about the purpose of their learning. Teachers need to ensure all children understand their strengths and areas for improvement. This will help children take responsibility for improving their own learning. Staff need to do more to provide children with opportunities to have a say about their learning and in decisions that affect them.
- Most children across the school behave well but a few children disrupt the learning and play of other children. The leadership team and staff should work together to reduce the number of children disrupting learning across the school. More needs done to meet the social emotional and learning needs of children in classes. This would help support children to behave better in class and in the breakout areas. Overall, teachers need to provide children with more motivating, engaging learning to meet learning needs in class. This would support the development of a more positive ethos within the school.
- The depute headteacher and teachers have begun to work well together to develop how children learn through play. They have introduced improvements to learning through play within a short period of time. They now need to ensure that learning through play meets the needs of all children and raises attainment. The leadership team and staff should continue to work together to explore the national practice guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me. This would provide a continued opportunity for professional learning for all staff to ensure a balance between responsive and intentional learning. The leadership team should ensure that in all classes, children are making appropriate progress in their learning within the play environment. All staff need to develop a shared understanding of the role of the adult to ensure they all support progress in learning through play effectively.
- All children from P1 to P5 share digital devices provided by The City of Edinburgh Council. These devices support children's learning in class. Children in P6 and P7 have individual

devices and use these to support learning at home. Younger children enjoy playing games to reinforce early reading and number skills. As children move through the school, they are becoming more confident in accessing their learning through their devices. A few children show high levels of skill in completing tasks using their device. There is a need to develop children's skills in digital literacy in a more planned, progressive way to enable all children to build on their skills effectively as they move through the school.

- Teachers use a few assessments to check how much and how well children have learned in class. Teachers should use this information more effectively to inform learning and teaching in classes. In a few classes, staff record these in an assessment folder to show the progress children are making in literacy and numeracy. The leadership team need to work with staff to develop staffs' understanding of assessment further. There is a need to support staff in how they assess progress through the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels with more accuracy. Staff need to ensure they plan more fully for all areas of the learning. In doing this, they should ensure they provide children with opportunities for breadth, challenge, and application in learning. There is a need to plan learning for individuals and groups of children within each class to support progression in learning.
- The system to track children's attainment started in August 2021. In a few classes, this tracking data is incomplete. As a result, these teachers are unable to use this data effectively to raise attainment or meet children's needs. Staff also produce a milestone tracker indicating which children are on track or in need of support. The leadership team and staff need to work together to ensure this document is accurate and information from it used to inform learning and teaching.
- The leadership team should ensure teachers now use the National Benchmarks to make accurate judgements about children's attainment in relation to national standards. The leadership team should provide more support for teachers to moderate the standard for achievement of a CfE level. The leadership team and staff meet termly to discuss children's progress and plan interventions for children requiring support. Senior leaders need to document decisions made at these meetings to help ensure all staff are clear about what is expected of them. The leadership team should provide professional learning for staff to support them in developing a more rigorous and robust approach to assessment.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have created a general topic overview for all subjects including literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use this to plan learning across the curriculum. This does not provide sufficient detail to plan learning across the CfE levels and support children to make progress in their learning. Staff who deliver discrete subjects such as physical education, science and relationships, sexual health and parenthood education use progression pathways to plan learning. There is a need to plan more fully across all areas of the curriculum to ensure the curriculum provides breadth, challenge and application in learning.
- As a matter of urgency, senior leaders should ensure all staff use progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum to plan learning. They should support teachers to plan learning that helps children to build on their prior learning. There is an urgent need for staff to use progression pathways to deliver the health and wellbeing curriculum. This will help build children's knowledge and understanding in all areas of health and wellbeing.
- There is a need for staff to review their approach to interdisciplinary learning to reflect the needs and interests of children and reflect local circumstances. There needs to be clearer plans in place to allow children to build on their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. More needs done to involve children in designing the curriculum.
- Teachers are at the early stages of planning quality outdoor learning. A few classes have opportunities to learn outdoors within the courtyards. Staff should work together to develop a progression pathway to ensure all children experience challenging outdoor learning that builds on their prior learning. A few children are in a pupil group to develop sustainability. Staff should develop with children a deeper understanding of sustainability as children move through the school. Children have access to two hours of quality physical education each week. Children in P1 to P7 have the opportunity to learn French and children in P5 to P7 also learn German. There is a need to review the approach to developing modern languages to ensure all children receive their entitlements as they move through the school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The headteacher has used some Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to appoint a member of staff to carry out family engagement work. This has been successful in building up relationships with parents and to support improved attendance at school. In a few cases, the family engagement worker has been instrumental in signposting parents to financial advice and support.
- Staff use an online journal to communicate with parents throughout the year about their child's progress in learning. The leadership team should work with parents to review this approach as many parents feel this is not working as well as it should. The headteacher uses a school newsletter and email to communicate to parents on a range of issues. A significant number of parents feel that communication with the school could be better.
- Staff have positive relationships with the Parent Council and the Parent Teacher Association. They support the school in fundraising ventures and are currently raising money to furnish a sensory room. Now that COVID-19 restrictions have eased, parents are keen to be more involved in the life of the school. Staff have positive relationships with a range of partners who support the school in meeting children's needs.

## 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

weak

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

- Staff display the school values of 'kind, safe, inclusive and respect' across the school. This helps children to become familiar with the values. Most children can describe what the values mean and recognise their importance in their school. Teachers should now ensure that they develop these values in class lessons to further support children to demonstrate respectful, positive relationships across the school.
- The majority of children in East Craigs Primary School can name the wellbeing indicators and can discuss what they mean. Most children have difficulty identifying their own wellbeing needs and how the wellbeing indicators relate to their own lives. A majority of staff use the wellbeing wheel to assess children's needs and inform their teaching. However, all teachers need to use these tools more consistently to ensure that information gathered helps address children's wellbeing needs. This will support children to accurately reflect on their own wellbeing.
- Across the school most children are not well informed about a few aspects of their health and wellbeing. The leadership team should work with staff, children, and key stakeholders to develop a planned and progressive health and wellbeing programme across the school. This should include strengthening areas of wellbeing including food and health, substance misuse and planning for choices and changes. The headteacher should now ensure staff make use of the local authority health and wellbeing progression planner to support this work. This will ensure children experience all aspects of the health and wellbeing curriculum and build on their previous learning as they move through the school.
- Most teachers deliver lessons linked to children's rights. The school has previously achieved a bronze award for their work on developing children's understanding of their rights. Most children are not confident in discussing their rights and what it means in their lives. Staff should revisit their previous work on rights to ensure this becomes more embedded and part of children's everyday learning experiences. A small number of children feel that their views are not heard or valued.
- Children have limited opportunities to use play equipment in the playground during breaks and lunchtimes. Most children say that they would like to have access to more resources to support their play. The provision of outdoor learning is an area of focus for improvement across the school. In order to create appropriate and safe conditions for outdoor learning, staff should work to improve these environments for learning through the regular maintenance and organisation of these spaces. This should include a focus on the safety of children using these outdoor areas. There is a need to revisit the existing risk assessments for outdoor areas to ensure these identify appropriate risks and actions to mitigate against these. Across the school, many of the learning environments need to be de-cluttered and

improved. This will support children to look after and respect their learning environments and improve the climate for learning. In addition, there is a need to review children's experience in the dining hall. At present, staff do not encourage children to eat well in a nurturing, social environment.

- Staff are working with children on how to improve and repair relationships to encourage positive interactions with their peers. This has not yet had sufficient impact on improving children's relationships with each other. A few parents are concerned about behaviour and low-level disruption within and outwith classes. The inspection team observed children across the school during classes, in the playground, in the dinner hall and in the corridors having difficulty self-regulating their behaviours. The leadership team, staff, parents and children should work together to develop clear guidance which reflects the school's vision for the wellbeing of all children.
- A minority of parents, children and staff, say that bullying occurs in the school and is not always dealt with well, or communicated effectively to parents. Staff need to work with children and families to make them more aware of the school anti-bullying policy. They need to work with children and families to develop an effective approach to anti-bullying. This will ensure that all children feel safe in school and parents have more confidence in the schools' handling of incidents of bullying.
- Children's attendance at school is in line with the national average. Staff provide support for families on how to improve their child's attendance. As a result the attendance of most children is improving.
- Staff are confident in their statutory duties around child protection. All take part regularly in professional learning on safeguarding and child protection. Staff identify children in their classes who have additional support needs. Support for learning staff and pupil support assistants provide children with a range of effective supports to improve their work. This work is improving outcomes for a few children who have difficulties with their learning.
- Staff are not clear enough about the specific barriers to learning experienced by children. As a result, teachers are unable to provide clear information on children's progress. Teachers should carry out clearer assessments to understand the barriers children are facing and identify appropriate interventions to support children to overcome these barriers.
- A significant number of children who require individual educational plans (IEPS), do not have plans in place. Senior leaders should now work with staff to develop IEPs for all children who have specific barriers to learning. In doing this, they should set clear targets to address specific needs through consultation with staff, children and parents. These IEPs should be reviewed regularly to measure children's progress in overcoming their specific barriers to learning.
- Staff are beginning to analyse the ways in which the curriculum promotes equality. East Craigs Primary School represents a multi faith community. In a few classes, staff ensure that they celebrate children's cultures and faiths. This is not yet consistent practice across the school. Staff should review the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure a strengthened focus on teaching about equality and inclusion. This will further support staff in developing children's understanding on the importance of these key areas.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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 at all stages across the school is not strong enough. A significant number of children could be achieving much more. The school's attainment data is not yet accurate. More needs done to ensure teachers develop a shared understanding of national standards to ensure their professional judgements about children's attainment is more accurate and robust.
- Most children with additional support needs who work with the support for learning teacher, are making good progress in their learning. However, for those children with specific barriers to learning, staff are unable to provide information on their progress.
- Children's progress in literacy and numeracy shows important weaknesses. Across the school there are a significant number of children not making sufficient progress in line with national expectations.

### Attainment in literacy and English

#### Listening and talking

- Children on track to achieve early level listen to their teachers well. They can take turns during class discussions and can follow directions. Children on track to achieve first level take turns and listen carefully to the opinions of others. They can build on the opinions and views of others during group work. Children on track to achieve second level talk confidently about the skills needed to speak to an audience or when debating a topic. Children need support to build on their listening and talking skills across learning. Across the school, children need to experience learning which helps them build on their skills in a planned and progressive way as they move through the school.

#### Reading

- Children working towards early level are developing their confidence to hear and say initial sounds and blends. They are not experienced in using their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read unfamiliar words. A few children could be progressing at a quicker pace. Children who are on track to achieve first level by the end of P4 read familiar texts with increasing fluency and expression. They can summarise the main ideas from a text and name different features of the writer's use of language. At early and first level, a few children would benefit from reading more challenging texts. Children who are on track to achieve second level by the end of P7 can identify techniques the author uses to influence the reader, for example word choice, emotive language and rhetorical questions. A few children at first and second levels need support to achieve more depth of understanding in reading and to develop further their higher order reading skills. Children across the school now need

to develop their reading skills through a wider range of texts. At first and second level, most children can talk about their favourite authors and explain why they prefer certain books. Staff should continue to nurture children's enthusiasm of books and provide children with books to take home. A few children working towards the end of first level are not confident reading aloud in front of their peers. They need more regular opportunities to read aloud for a range of audiences. Children working towards the first level access the library van. Children working towards the second level would benefit from more regular opportunities to visit the local library or the library van to help access a wider range of texts.

## **Writing**

- At the early level, too few children write independently and have a go at writing new words. A few children know how to write common words and try to use these in their play. The majority of children are unable to form letters correctly. Children who are on track to achieve first level by the end of P4 can write fact files and poetry using the relevant features of these texts. Children who are on track to achieve second level by the end of P7 are using a wider range of vocabulary and can write to influence, explore issues and express opinions. Across first and second levels, children do not write at length regularly enough or for a wide range of purposes appropriate to their age and stage. Teachers need to have higher expectations for children's writing. All children need more experience to write in a variety of genres, using appropriate structure and vocabulary. Across the school, children's spelling and punctuation skills needs to improve.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

### **Number, money and measure**

- Most children who are working towards the early level count forwards and backwards within 20. A few children can add two and three numbers to 20 but find subtraction more challenging. A significant number of children write numbers back to front. At first level children use coins to pay for and receive change from £1. They can tell the time using analogue clocks. At first level children are not confident in multiplication of two digits by one-digit and are not fluent in their times tables. They are not able to carry out simple calculations using division. Children working towards second level can read large numbers and are confident describing place value. They are not confident in multiplying and dividing large numbers by two-digit numbers. Children can carry out money calculations involving the four operations. At second level children are not confident using fractions, decimals and percentages. Across all levels, children have a limited understanding of measure. More needs done to develop children's confidence in using strategies to help them carry out mental calculations.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Children who are secure at early and first level can name and describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes. They are unable to name three-dimensional objects. At second level, children recognise and name a range of triangles but are unable to explain their properties. A few children can describe a range of angles. Children need more regular opportunities to develop and extend their mathematical skills.

### **Information handling**

- Across the school, children are unable to name the features of graphs or describe how they would gather and display data appropriate to their stage.

## Attainment over time

- The leadership team track the attainment and progress of individual children in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. This data is not robust and does not provide a reliable picture of children's attainment over time. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop consistent approaches to gathering data that will accurately illustrate trends in progress and attainment over time for all children. Overall, most children should be making much better progress over time.
- Senior leaders should continue to support staff to engage more fully with the National Benchmarks and in moderation activities in literacy and numeracy. They need to ensure that all staff make confident and accurate professional judgements about how well children are learning and progressing.

## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children have opportunities to share and celebrate personal achievements through their online journals. However, they are unable to talk about the skills they are developing through these achievements. Staff should support children to better understand how their achievements are supporting them to develop as learners. The school has recently re-instated a variety of lunchtime clubs. The Active Schools team support clubs such as athletics and basketball. Staff record participation in wider activities to identify children who are at risk of missing out. A few children have leadership roles on committees such as sustainability, digital leaders and children's rights. Children at P7 can become house captains and take part in leading school assemblies. Staff should support children to take a leading role in evaluating and recording the development of their skills for learning, life and work through pupil leadership and other wider opportunities.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders use appropriate data and their knowledge of individual children and families to inform approaches to equity. The headteacher prioritises the use of PEF to employ additional staff to provide targeted support for individual children. This support is improving children's attendance at school. Staff identify children who have additional support needs and require interventions to raise attainment. Senior leaders and staff now need to show how they are measuring the impact of interventions on identified children. There is a need to review the activities delivered through PEF to ensure they have a clear focus on raising attainment and accelerating the progress of those most in need.
- Senior leaders and staff are increasingly aware of the implications of the cost of the school day and signpost families to financial support available to them. The school offers a uniform and clothing bank for families. This helps support families in times of difficulty. Senior leaders ensure cost is not a barrier to participation in educational trips. An external provider operates a breakfast club in school. However, only a few families can use this service and it is not free. The leadership team should look at more ways to develop approaches to equity across the school.

## 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.