

Summarised inspection findings

The Royal High Primary School

The City of Edinburgh Council

27 October 2026

Key contextual information

The Royal High Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the Mountcastle, Piershill and Northfield areas of East Edinburgh. The school has a nursery class for children aged three to those not yet attending school. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months. She is supported by a deputy headteacher, a principal teacher and a business manager. At the time of inspection there were 276 children on the school roll, across 11 classes. Approximately two fifths of children receive additional support for their learning. Most children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones 5 to 10. Twenty-two percent of children are identified as having English as an additional language. There are over 30 different languages spoken within the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

- Senior leaders and staff have created a calm, positive and respectful ethos across the school. All staff model high expectations of behaviour and support children to follow the Ready, Respectful and Safe guidance which is prominently displayed throughout the school. As a result, all children benefit from extremely positive interactions with staff and each other.
- Teachers have worked together successfully to evaluate their classroom environments using a helpful auditing tool. They ensure that consistent visual supports are in place across classrooms to support inclusive learning and clear communication. As a result, all classroom environments are well-organised, welcoming and nurturing. Children access resources and spaces independently to support their engagement, learning and wellbeing. This approach is helping children to take increasing responsibility for their learning, engage positively in activities and supports them to regulate their emotions effectively.
- In most lessons learning is planned well and children are appropriately challenged. In these lessons teachers use a range of approaches to enhance children's motivation and engagement. Children work independently, in pairs and in groups effectively. In most lessons teachers support children well to self-assess how focused and motivated they are during lessons. However, in a few lessons, children spend too long listening to their teacher. This results in children being too passive in their learning. Teachers should now ensure that all lessons are appropriately paced and set at the right level of difficulty for all children. This should help maximise children's engagement and lead to sustained improvements in progress and attainment.

- Senior leaders have led high-quality professional learning for teachers through providing helpful workshops, professional reading and shared learning activities. Teachers have applied this professional learning effectively to support the implementation of the new, learning, teaching and assessment toolkit. This is establishing improved consistency in the quality of aspects of teaching and learning across the school. Teachers have developed a clear structure in lessons and plan tasks which link well to the purpose of the lesson. In almost all lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and they use learning intentions and steps to success well. In a few lessons children and teachers collaborate to agree these together. This supports children effectively to understand how to be successful in their learning. Senior leaders and teachers should reflect upon the impact of these improvements and take time to ensure they are fully embedded. This should help to ensure greater consistency in high-quality teaching and learning across the school.
- In most lessons, teachers provide children with effective verbal feedback which progresses their learning well. Most teachers are beginning to use a consistent approach to written feedback, particularly in children's writing jotters. However, the standard of written feedback is not yet of a consistently high quality across all curricular areas. As planned, senior leaders and teachers should agree upon manageable approaches to written feedback. This should support children to understand better what they are doing well and how to improve further.
- Senior leaders have led improvement effectively in the use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching. They have supported teachers successfully to develop their digital skills. Consequently, all children access tablets to engage in research, games, and word processing to consolidate and extend their learning. This is supporting children well in developing and applying a range of important digital skills. A few children across the school access purposefully, a variety of assistive technology including talk to text and translation applications. This is enhancing children's ability to access the curriculum.
- Children at early level benefit from regular high-quality play activities both within the classroom and in the 'quad'. Teachers value the importance of play and engage in weekly planning sessions with the early years' staff. This has led to the creation of stimulating, and well-resourced play environments which support children positively to develop their curiosity and creativity.
- Teachers use successfully a range of formative and summative assessments to make judgements about children's progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They use targeted assessment approaches to ensure children who require additional support are making appropriate progress. All teachers use national Benchmarks to assess clearly what children know and are able to do. They use data gathered in National Standardised Assessments and other tests to identify gaps in children's learning. Senior leaders and teachers use this data effectively to plan useful learning experiences and interventions for groups and individual learners. This is helping to ensure all children make positive progress in learning.
- Staff have undertaken helpful moderation activities to develop a shared understanding of national standards. Most recently they have focused on moderating aspects of writing and approaches to planning for children's learning. Teachers' application of national standards and expectations when judging children's progress has strengthened as a result. Senior leaders should now support teachers to extend this approach to promote greater consistency in teacher's professional judgments across all curricular areas.

- Teachers plan well over different timescales using Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. They use local authority progression pathways effectively to plan children's learning in key areas of the curriculum. They should now incorporate progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum. This should help teachers plan learning that builds effectively on what children already know. Teachers have developed useful approaches to planning activities that link children's learning across the curriculum. They ask children what and how they want to learn. This supports teachers to plan lessons successfully, incorporating children's interests, which improves children's motivation and engagement. Across the school, children learn French which is planned progressively. Senior leaders and staff should build on this practice to ensure children experience high-quality learning and teaching in a second additional language from P5-P7. This in line with the Scottish Government's 1 + 2 Modern language policy.
- Senior leaders have developed robust systems to track all children's progress and achievement in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. This includes cohorts of children who may be facing additional challenges. For example, they track the progress of those with additional support needs, young carers or children from families in financial hardship. They use this information well to inform their plans for children's learning. As a result, the provision of universal support is very effective. Senior leaders meet with teachers three times across the year to monitor attainment and address any factors that may impact on children's progress and achievement. Staff take timely and effective action to plan appropriate interventions to enhance children's progress and learning. They evaluate the impact of these interventions regularly to help ensure that children's needs are being met well.

Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

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

- Children learn in a calm, welcoming and nurturing environment where they feel valued, respected and safe. Almost all children demonstrate their understanding and application of the values through their interactions and behaviours. Children are kind and respectful to each other and try their best. Staff, children and parents demonstrate an increasingly strong and consistent approach to using the language of rights. This results in a positive, caring community, where children thrive.
- The strategic leadership of wellbeing is a major strength of the school. Senior leaders ensure highly effective, robust systems and processes are in place to track, monitor and support children's wellbeing. Staff engage in high-quality professional learning, such as mental health and nurture approaches, increasing their skills and confidence in supporting children's wellbeing. Staff track children's wellbeing over time to measure the effectiveness of planned support and interventions. They identify any dips and trends during regular wellbeing meetings and use this to identify appropriate next steps. As a result, the support for children's wellbeing across the school is very strong.
- The pupil wellbeing group have played a significant role in leading the development of children's understanding of wellbeing over the past two years. The prominent, attractive displays in the school's 'wellbeing walkway' effectively demonstrate the key strategies now used to support wellbeing. Staff, children, and increasingly parents, share a common language of wellbeing. Visuals, such as the 'shanarri calamari', and the 'river of resilience', help children identify and use the language of the wellbeing indicators very well. Children's ability and confidence to evaluate their own wellbeing accurately has increased significantly as a result. All children have at least one identified 'trusted adult' who they feel comfortable talking to should they have any worries. Children's wellbeing data over the past three years demonstrates significant and sustained improvement. Incidents of bullying have reduced very significantly over the past year. Almost all children feel safe, however a few children and parents would like to see further improvement with regards to addressing bullying. As a next step, senior leaders should continue to work with the whole school community to develop their understanding of what bullying is, how to report it and how to access support.
- Senior leaders maintain a strong focus on ensuring staff wellbeing. They provide weekly drop-in sessions to ensure staff have a safe space in which to talk. This contributes to the strong sense of teamwork and belonging across the staff team. Consequently, staff work in a stable collegiate and professional working environment where children benefit from sensitive interactions and experiences with all adults across the school.

- Staff use a range of assessment tools very effectively to gather baseline and post intervention data. They carefully align wellbeing groups to the specific needs and interests of those requiring support. Most children attending wellbeing groups, including the garden group and sewing club, demonstrate improved wellbeing post intervention. All children experiencing bereavement and loss who attended the school's targeted support felt it helped them understand that change and loss are a normal part of life.
- Staff deliver a highly effective family learning programme at both school and cluster level. This helps key adults in children's lives take a consistent approach to supporting their wellbeing. All parents attending the programme report a positive increase in their confidence to support their child's mental and emotional wellbeing. Parents feel more able to reach out to staff for informal support and advice following their engagement in this programme. Senior leaders and staff are supporting local authority wide improvement through sharing their practice with other schools.
- Staff implement a robust, health and wellbeing curriculum, ensuring that children develop the necessary knowledge and skills in a planned, progressive way. They undertake daily check ins and apply consistent and effective strategies to support children's resilience across the school. Children are increasingly able to apply strategies that support them to regulate and maintain positive wellbeing. As a result, almost all children feel that the school teaches them how to have a healthy lifestyle.
- All staff engage in regular child protection training, including enhanced training for senior leaders. As a result, they understand their statutory requirements and are confident in their knowledge and understanding of child protection policies and procedures. Senior leaders undertake regular audits, ensuring staff implement procedures in line with local and national guidance. Children who are care experienced receive appropriate individualised support, including at points of transition. Senior leaders track and monitor the attainment, attendance and the wider achievements of these children closely to ensure their wellbeing and learning needs are met.
- Staff work very effectively with parents and partners to develop clear individual support plans to improve outcomes for children. They ensure the views of children inform the regular planning and review process. Staff gather a range of robust evidence to demonstrate children's progress. They ensure targets are reviewed regularly with appropriate next steps now linked to specific wellbeing indicators. Senior leaders monitor effectively the quality of support plans and their implementation. As a result, almost all children in receipt of additional support are making appropriate progress in relation to their individual targets.
- Staff's very effective partnership working enables the provision of an increasingly wide range of clubs and activities. In partnership with Active Schools, staff meticulously track children's engagement. Staff have successfully increased levels of children's participation in clubs and activities by understanding and removing potential barriers to participation. Almost all children now take part in a wide range of clubs, with most children increasing the number of activities they engage with. This supports children very well to be included, engaged and involved.
- The number of young carers identified and receiving support has increased significantly over the past year. The highly effective Young Carers Group builds and promotes positive peer

support. As a result, most young carers demonstrate improved attendance and wellbeing, particularly in relation to their feeling of inclusion.

- Pupil support assistants (PSAs) work very effectively in collaboration with teachers and senior leaders to deliver a range of targeted interventions to support effectively children's wellbeing and raise attainment. PSA's engagement in professional learning enables them to deliver relevant, impactful support strategies with increasing confidence and consistency.
- Staff use their detailed knowledge of the school community very well to ensure all cultures and faiths are reflected in the curriculum. Children have access to a well-stocked and diverse range of texts which promote equality and diversity. They value seeing their own identities, cultures and experiences represented in the books available to them in the library. Senior leaders have adapted the assembly programme to better reflect the school's demographic. This includes, for example, a focus on Black History Month and the Young Carer's Day of Action. Staff have refreshed the curriculum to ensure rights and equalities are embedded in all aspects of learning. Children and their families are enthusiastic about sharing their culture and faith, further strengthening the inclusive ethos of the school. Staff plan events such as multi-cultural coffee mornings to help promote this further. As a result, children's understanding of themselves and others as global citizens is increasing. They are becoming more able to challenge discrimination. Senior leaders are now well placed to update the school's equality policy, with the involvement of staff, children, parents and partners.

Other relevant evidence

- Overall, attendance figures have improved over recent years. The school's current attendance is 94.6% for year 2025-26 which is in line with the national average. A few children have attendance below 90% and numbers of children with persistent low attendance has decreased by 60% from the previous year. Staff monitor children's attendance systematically and follow local authority guidance. They identify patterns of concern early and take timely, effective action, where needed, to improve attendance. For example, they make home visits and have introduced a trusted adult approach to help children transition smoothly into school. In addition, they support targeted groups of learners to engage in a variety of clubs. Senior leaders regularly promote the benefits of positive school attendance with children and families. Consequently, there has been improvement with children's overall attendance. There are no children on part-time timetables.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- Senior leaders provide highly effective strategic leadership for wellbeing, equality and inclusion through a rights-based approach embedded across the school. Children use the wellbeing indicators confidently to evaluate their own wellbeing. They seek help from trusted adults and access support promptly when concerns arise. Staff use robust tracking and monitoring systems very well to identify children's needs early and provide helpful interventions to support children's positive wellbeing. Staff use data very effectively to monitor children's progress towards wellbeing and learning targets. Senior leaders provide staff with high-quality professional learning that increases the confidence of staff and strengthens inclusive practice. Staff work closely and effectively with partners to provide timely support for children and families. These approaches improve children's wellbeing, strengthens inclusion and helps achieve positive outcomes for children.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard HMIE 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.

On behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland.