

Summarised inspection findings

Stenhouse Primary School

The City of Edinburgh Council

3 March 2026

Key contextual information

Stenhouse Primary School is a non-denominational primary school serving the Stenhouse area of Edinburgh. At the time of inspection, the school roll consisted of 264 children working across 12 mainstream classes and two enhanced support base (ESB) classes. The headteacher has been in post for less than a year and is supported by a deputy headteacher and a principal teacher. A minority of children are registered for free school meals. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 to 4. The school reported that just over half of children require additional support with their learning and just under one third of children have English as an additional language.

Stenhouse 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

good

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

- Staff have a strong understanding of the school's context and know their children well. This is evident in the caring and nurturing ethos they promote, which aligns closely with the school's values of being respectful, kind, inclusive, responsible, a team.
- Senior leaders recently led a highly effective review of the school's vision and values, involving all children, partners, staff, parents and carers. This thorough and collaborative process ensures the school's values remain relevant, meaningful and reflective of the school community. Senior leaders revisit and celebrate regularly the school's values during 'gather round' assemblies, where children speak proudly about how they demonstrate the values in practice. Staff also encourage families to recognise and share when children demonstrate the values at home and in the community, through the 'living our values' award. This creative approach ensures the school's values are consistently reinforced and deeply embedded across the school community.
- The headteacher has very quickly established a positive and purposeful culture of improvement. Most staff, parents and carers agree that the school is led well. Staff speak positively about recent changes and feel well supported in their roles. Senior leaders promote a

collaborative culture successfully in which staff lead change together. A minority of staff lead specific areas of interest and provide valued support to colleagues, sharing their expertise effectively across the school. A few teachers also contribute effectively to development initiatives across the local authority. However, a few parents and carers and a minority of staff feel that communication could be clearer and more impactful. For example, they feel that information does not always reach everyone consistently or in a timely manner. Senior leaders should review communication processes to improve clarity and consistency.

- Senior leaders support staff effectively to develop a shared understanding of strengths and areas for improvement using robust self-evaluation. Senior leaders gather staff's, parents' and carers' views systematically using appropriate self-evaluation frameworks. They support children very well to share their views using 'How good is OUR school' (2017). Senior leaders use self-evaluation information to accurately identify relevant improvement priorities.
- Senior leaders plan school improvement priorities effectively and identify clear outcomes. They manage the pace of change well and give staff time to embed new approaches. This work is leading to positive change that is beginning to improve the quality of learning and teaching. For example, staff now support children more consistently to understand what they are learning and what success looks like. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to strengthen key aspects of learning and teaching and to develop greater consistency in practice across the school. This should help ensure that high-quality learning experiences are delivered reliably in all lessons.
- Senior leaders and staff have made a positive start in strengthening approaches to monitoring the school's work. This session, they introduced a refreshed quality assurance calendar to support a more systematic approach. Senior leaders work collaboratively with staff to monitor the quality of teaching. They visit classes, review children's work and hold learning conversations with children to evaluate the quality of learning and teaching. Children, in their role as house captains, also contribute to improvement by visiting classes and providing feedback to peers, which children value and respond to positively. Senior leaders should now focus their feedback more sharply on actions that will improve the quality of teaching. This should help teachers evaluate more precisely what is working well and where further improvement is needed.
- Children's views are valued and they meaningfully influence decisions that affect them. Staff provide regular opportunities for children to express their views and shape aspects of school life through weekly class council. For example, children have initiated successfully clubs such as chess, crochet and digital skills. Most children take on leadership roles through groups including the 'sustainability squad' and the 'rights respecters' which promote responsibility and active citizenship. These experiences help children feel proud of the contributions they make to their school and wider community. Senior leaders should now progress plans to ensure younger children also access these important leadership opportunities. This should support their development as responsible, active members of the school community from the earliest stage.
- Senior leaders have engaged effectively with the local authority to provide well-planned professional learning opportunities for staff. For example, staff have strengthened their

understanding of the importance of reinforcing previous learning to children. As a result, in most lessons teachers now give children regular opportunities to make links with prior learning. Staff undertake professional enquiry approaches where staff explore and improve their classroom practice, skills and knowledge. They should now proceed with plans to develop this further and ensure staff collect baseline evidence. This has the potential to help staff evaluate the impact of their work more clearly and strengthen outcomes for children.

- Senior leaders recently reviewed their approaches to addressing inequity. They have developed a clear vision to raise attainment, including for the most disadvantaged, through improved learning and teaching. In addition, staff identify children who receive targeted help that improves their learning and attendance at school. Senior leaders plan for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) successfully. Additional staffing and resources carefully align with their vision to reduce the inequities. Senior leader consult staff in the use of PEF. They should now meaningfully consult with pupils and parents in determining how this fund can best reduce the poverty-related attainment gap.

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

- Across the school, staff promote strong positive relationships with children. Children benefit from a well-established ethos underpinned by a caring and inclusive culture. All staff interact with children in a kind, respectful and nurturing way. As a result, most children feel supported and valued within their school community.
- Teachers have used an auditing tool to review learning environments. This has resulted in the provision of classrooms that are calm, inclusive and supportive. Teachers use these spaces to contribute positively to children's ability to self-regulate their behaviour. A few children who require help to manage their behaviour are supported very well by pupil support assistants. Pupil support assistants enable children to access a range of appropriate support, including alternative learning spaces, which help children to re-engage with learning more quickly. This approach contributes positively to consistent behaviour management and most children feeling safe at school.
- In a few lessons, teachers ask children what they already know and what they would like to learn. However, in a minority of lessons, learning remains largely teacher-directed, resulting in children being too passive in their engagement. Teachers should further develop their understanding of how to promote children's engagement and independence during classroom activities. In addition, they should increase opportunities for children to take greater ownership of tasks and decisions. This has the potential to help sustain children's motivation and active involvement.
- In most lessons, staff share the purpose of learning effectively, helping children understand what they are learning and why it matters. Most children explain well what they need to do to be successful and are beginning to use this information to make improvements to their work. In most lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. Most teachers use questioning effectively to check for children's understanding. In the majority of classes, teachers use assessment strategies well to assess children's understanding during lessons. In a few lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to deepen children's thinking and develop higher order thinking skills. This helps children become more confident in explaining their ideas and reasoning. Teachers should build on this positive approach consistently across all lessons.

- All teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to support whole-class lessons. Older children use digital technology well to enhance their learning. For example, children use digital applications creatively to produce weather reports in French. A few children benefit from the use of assistive technology to enable them to engage more easily with reading and writing tasks and activities. Children in P5 to P7 undertake the role of 'digital buddy', supporting younger children well to develop confidence and independence in using digital devices.
- Staff have made a positive start to creating a play-based environment for learning at the early stages. Staff should now engage further with national practice guidance and professional learning. This should strengthen their ability to provide high-quality play experiences that engage children in meaningful and purposeful learning. Although a new dedicated play environment is now in place that supports children with additional support needs well, it does not meet the needs of all children. Staff should review how best to provide play-based learning within classroom environments and outdoor spaces.
- In most lessons, staff provide regular, informal verbal feedback that helps children understand their progress in learning. Staff have begun to develop more consistent approaches to providing high-quality written feedback in writing and numeracy. In a few classes, children have dedicated time to use this feedback to edit and improve their work, which is beginning to improve their skills, particularly in writing. Staff should continue to improve approaches to providing consistent high-quality feedback across the school. This should support children to develop their self- and peer-assessment skills and improve their ability to work independently.
- Senior leaders have recently created a helpful assessment calendar. Staff use a range of assessments throughout the year to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. However, the current range and use of assessments do not always provide staff with a clear enough overview of any gaps in children's progress or inform next steps effectively. Staff should plan assessments more frequently and thoroughly so that children can demonstrate their application of learning, enabling staff to identify and address gaps more quickly.
- Senior leaders meet termly with teachers to discuss children's progress. Teachers have made a positive start in identifying gaps in individual children's attainment in writing and have developed action plans to address these. Senior leaders should continue to develop this practice across all aspects of literacy and numeracy. Tracking meetings also include the identification of children requiring additional support, enabling teachers to plan appropriate targeted interventions. Teachers now need to apply greater rigour to ensure action plans include universal interventions that are led by class teachers. This should allow them to provide children with a broader range of appropriate support.
- Staff engage in moderation activities with colleagues within the school and the learning community to build their understanding of national standards of attainment. They use national Benchmarks appropriately when planning for assessments. Most teachers are confident in understanding what achievement of Curriculum of Excellence (CfE) levels look like in literacy and numeracy.

- Senior leaders and teachers have recently reviewed approaches to planning. They recognise correctly that further work is required to strengthen links between planning, learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers are at the early stages of implementing a new format for planning over the long, medium and short term. They make appropriate reference to local authority progression pathways to inform their planning in literacy and numeracy. Staff should now continue to implement and embed these new planning approaches, including planning more consistently to meet the needs of individual children who require extra support or challenge.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff are beginning to develop the school's curriculum offer, taking account of the CfE design principles. Teachers have begun to use local authority learning progression pathways to support their planning of literacy and wellbeing. By using these pathways, teachers are beginning to strengthen approaches to planning for progression in learning. Staff work closely with the Edinburgh Learns Team to support the implementation of digital skills progression across the school. However, progressive learning pathways are not yet in place for all areas of the curriculum, resulting in gaps in learning. Staff should address this to ensure that all children are receiving their full entitlement to a broad, balanced general education.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing approaches to planning learning that links different areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders should support staff to develop greater clarity about how curriculum areas can be connected and how progression in learning will be achieved. A next step is to create a more robust planning framework against which all aspects of the curriculum can be aligned.
- Children throughout the school learn French progressively as part of the national '1 + 2' languages policy. Children in P5 to P7 also learn Mandarin with a visiting specialist instructor.
- The school benefits from extensive grounds that provide a wide range of outdoor learning opportunities, and staff also make effective use of community spaces. Staff utilise a wide range of opportunities and partnerships within the local community to support curriculum delivery. For example, the school's involvement in the 'Edinburgh 900' project supported children to understand their role as global citizens through art projects. In addition, strong partnership working with the 'Green Team' is helping to develop staff's confidence and skills in delivering outdoor learning approaches, such as gardening. Children in P7 further benefit from an outdoor learning residential experience where they are challenged through a range of activities that build resilience, teamwork and independence. There is potential for staff to further develop outdoor learning, utilising school grounds more effectively and continuing to develop teaching approaches for learning for sustainability. This will ensure all children experience progressive skills and knowledge development in outdoor learning as they move through the school.
- All children experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Children in P4 and P5 have the opportunity to learn an important life skill by attending a block of swimming lessons.
- Staff have successfully refreshed the school library, including expanding the range of texts. Staff engaged with parents and carers to gather information about reading habits at home, and they sought children's views to identify favourite authors. They used this information to increase the range of texts available. Classes visit the school library weekly to promote reading for enjoyment. The introduction of book bags and reading records supports children to take books home. Junior librarians take responsibility for developing the library and creating resources for their peers.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Senior leaders use weekly online learning journals to provide parents and carers with regular insight into their child's learning. They also encourage families to share children's out-of-school achievements, which staff celebrate. Class teachers share a termly overview of planned learning to help parents and carers reinforce learning at home. As a result, most parents and carers feel well informed about how to support their child's learning. Staff's creative approach to planning family learning events has significantly increased parental participation.
- The recently refreshed Parent and Carers Council work with senior leaders to plan events for children and families throughout the year. They design these events carefully so that they are inclusive, meeting the needs of all children, including those who attend the Enhanced Support Base.

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

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

- Throughout the school, children benefit from warm, nurturing relationships with staff who know them very well as individuals. As a result, most children believe that the staff helps them to respect others. Staff actively encourage children to identify a trusted 'key adult' who can support their wellbeing should they need it. Staff have a strong understanding of the wellbeing needs in the local community and extend their 'key adult' approach to benefit parents and families. Parents and carers welcome these trusted relationships, and the support that staff provide. Staff's effective partnership working with a range of partners and organisations, such as the Edinburgh Family Support Partnership Umbrella Hub, helps strengthen the support provided.
- Senior leaders meet weekly to review identified wellbeing concerns, placing children's wellbeing and dignity at the heart of decision-making. These meetings enable staff to reflect regularly on practices and procedures designed to support wellbeing. Senior leaders employ a problem-solving approach, enabling the identification of appropriate strategies to support children. For example, a few children benefit from participating in physical education skills groups that help build confidence, increase engagement and develop their social skills. Staff's use of an effective tracking system ensures they maintain a strategic overview of the range of support measures provided. Building on this positive start, senior leaders should now strengthen approaches to measuring the impact of the strategies used. This should support staff to determine more accurately their effectiveness in improving children's wellbeing.
- Staff identified correctly the need to increase children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators and have taken action to address this. Children have begun to reflect on their own wellbeing on a termly basis. Staff use 'gather round assemblies' and class council discussions to further increase children's understanding of individual wellbeing indicators. Staff use these reflections appropriately to engage in meaningful discussion with individual children about their wellbeing. This helps children to develop a deeper understanding of how to be safe and healthy. Staff are at the early stages of tracking each term children's evaluations of their own health and wellbeing. This has the potential to help staff identify changes earlier and respond more effectively to emerging wellbeing needs.

- Staff use all available space within the school building creatively to provide a range of appropriate nurture spaces, such as 'the den', 'the treehouse' and 'the pantry'. Teachers, support staff and visiting specialists use these spaces well to support the wellbeing and learning needs of groups and individuals. This helps children feel safe, regulated and ready to engage in learning.
- Senior leaders ensure that clear policies are in place in relation to positive relationships, behaviour and bullying, and these reflect local authority guidance and are reviewed regularly. Children who require additional support to regulate their behaviour have individual plans and targeted support, including regular nurture input and involvement from partner agencies when appropriate. As a result, children receive coordinated, timely help that supports their wellbeing and enables them to participate more positively in learning.
- Children experience a range of relevant curriculum experiences to develop their understanding of how to stay healthy and well. For example, younger children learn about the importance of regular exercise, healthy eating and getting sufficient sleep. This helps them build positive habits early that contribute to long-term health and wellbeing. Older children develop an increasing understanding of how to keep safe when using digital technology. This helps support them to navigate online spaces more confidently and responsibly. They learn important life skills such as administering first aid. Most children feel that the school provides regular opportunities for them to take exercise. Children benefit from progressive development of practical skills and emotional strategies as part of their health and wellbeing programme. This increasingly enables children to cope more effectively with challenge and regulate their emotions. School events, such as the annual health week, further promote health and wellbeing across the school. Staff have identified correctly the need to develop a clearer health and wellbeing curriculum progression pathway.
- Senior leaders and staff undertake regular child protection training. All staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection. This enables them to engage effectively with and apply statutory requirements and codes of practice in line with local authority procedures. Senior leaders track staff's participation in child protection training to ensure all staff receive this annually. Effective systems are in place to ensure visitors and partners understand how they can raise concerns. Senior leaders ensure new staff receive clear induction training to ensure they understand relevant systems and procedures for keeping children safe.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the universal and targeted approaches they use to support children's wellbeing. They provide appropriate planning and support for children experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers use class support plans to gain a clear overview of children's additional needs and support strategies. This contributes to children experiencing learning that is well matched to their needs.
- Staff collaborate closely with parents and carers, children and partners to identify, plan and review appropriate wellbeing and learning targets. Staff should strengthen further the effectiveness of these targets by ensuring clearer measures for success are included. Senior

leaders ensure that children receive the right support at the right time, including from staff funded by PEF. This supports children to make appropriate progress and engage more confidently in their learning.

- Staff's support for children who are young carers is a strength of the school. Staff have a clear understanding of children who are young carers and track their progress as a cohort. Staff work in close partnership with the Broomhouse Young Carers team, enhancing staff skills in recognising and supporting children's needs. Identified children meet for lunch in partnership with the Broomhouse Young Carers team each month. This provides children with an opportunity to relax together, share experiences and seek assistance. An attractive wall display ensures this group have a clear identity within the school. This promotes a sense of belonging and helps children build resilience by feeling recognised and included.
- Children are very well supported at times of transition. Children entering P1 receive a transition bag containing a transition book, learning activity and resources, and a soft toy to provide emotional comfort. This helps children settle more smoothly into P1 and feel comfortable in their new environment. Staff ensure that children requiring enhanced transition as they move into P1, or from P7 to S1, are identified early. Staff work in partnership with children, parents and carers to develop bespoke packages of support. Learning community transition staff provide very effective support for identified children as they move to secondary school. All children in P7 spend time within the secondary school building with their P7 teacher. They experience a programme of online lessons covering a range of curricular areas delivered by secondary staff. This helps children build their confidence in their new school environment, reducing any anxiety they may have about transitioning.
- Staff value, respect and celebrate the inclusion, equality and diversity within the school community and promote this with children. Children actively demonstrate the school's core value of inclusion across all aspects of school life. Staff work to include all members of the school community in the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The range of reading resources has recently been extended to ensure they better reflect diversity. Staff engagement in professional learning is strengthening their ability to review all aspects of the school's provision to ensure equality and diversity. This includes developing staff's skills in understanding, identifying and challenging racism.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. The majority of children achieve expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy.
- The majority of children who require additional support make appropriate progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Across the school, a majority of children are making good progress in all aspects of literacy and English. A few children are capable of making better progress.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen to and follow simple instructions. They answer questions about characters in stories they hear. They now require more structured opportunities to take turns in small group discussions. At first level, the majority of children listen respectfully and respond appropriately to others. A few children require more support to show their understanding of the main ideas in conversations. At second level, most children confidently explain the difference between fact and opinion. They communicate their ideas and opinions clearly. Children would now benefit from more opportunities to build on the contributions of others.

Reading

- At early level, most children develop a secure knowledge of sounds and read familiar words and simple sentences. They confidently discuss likes and dislikes about story characters. A few children need more support to track each word accurately as they read. At first level, most children use punctuation well and read with expression. A minority need further practice answering inferential questions. At second level, most children read fluently and answer a range of questions accurately about texts. A minority need more opportunities to explore authors' language choices, including vocabulary and punctuation.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children use their increasing knowledge of sounds to create simple words successfully. A few children are beginning to write simple sentences with appropriate punctuation independently. At first level, the majority of children use engaging sentence openers and apply punctuation accurately in their writing. Children now need more regular opportunities to write extended pieces that include paragraphs. At second level, most children use notetaking effectively to create new texts. They use digital technology confidently to present their work. A few children need more opportunities to apply figurative language in writing.
- Across the school, recently introduced spelling approaches help most children tackle unfamiliar words with increasing confidence. A minority of children use teacher feedback to edit and improve their writing, which is beginning to strengthen the quality of their written content. However, standards of handwriting and presentation limits readability for a minority of children. Staff should now review handwriting learning and teaching approaches for younger children, including supporting accurate letter formation. In addition, digital presentation approaches should be expanded for older children. This has the potential to improve children's ability to read their writing independently and to edit and present their work more effectively.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children make satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are capable of making better progress. Teachers need to address gaps in children's mathematical knowledge to increase children's progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children count in sequence within the range of 0 to 10, forwards and backwards. They identify correctly which numbers are smaller and larger, and order numbers correctly. A minority of children at early level need support to address reversal of numbers as they write them. At first level, the majority of children solve simple, one-step word problems in real life contexts. They round numbers to 10 confidently but require support to round to the nearest 100. At second level, the majority of children multiply and divide whole numbers by multiples of 10, 100 and 1,000 correctly. They compare costs, determine affordability, and have a solid understanding of different ways that technology is used to make payments. They would benefit from more practice in converting durations of time.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children working at early level recognise and describe common two-dimensional (2D) shapes. They understand and correctly use the language of position and direction, including above, below, forwards and backwards. They would benefit from opportunities to recognise items in their environment that match regular three-dimensional (3D) objects. At first level, the majority of children name and identify a range of 2D shapes and describe their properties accurately, including sides, faces and edges. They require more support to develop their knowledge of common 3D objects. At second level, the majority of children use correct mathematical language when describing the properties of 3D objects. They need support when calculating area and perimeter of common shapes.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children sort items correctly based on colour, size, and shape. They ask simple questions to collect data. They need further support to interpret simple graphs and charts. At first level, the majority of children present information using bar graphs accurately. They would benefit from gathering and organising data in a wider range of ways. At second level, the majority of children use data in real-life contexts and identify a range of appropriate methods for collecting information. They extract information from a data set and display it in a variety of clear and appropriate ways. They now need further opportunities to develop their understanding of scale and labelling to improve the accuracy of their presentations.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders are not confident in the validity of historical attainment data over time due to children moving in and out of the school. They have begun to monitor children's attainment in literacy and numeracy using the recently introduced local authority's tracking system. Senior leaders use this information to understand whole-school attainment and progress. Senior leaders should now strengthen tracking processes further to enable analysis of data for groups and cohorts and to identify emerging trends. This should support them to measure attainment over time more effectively and evaluate the impact of school improvement initiatives and interventions.
- Last session, the average attendance was 91.7%. This was below the national attendance figure. Senior leaders report attendance is impacted by periods of ill health, term-time holidays and relocation of housing for families. Senior leaders work with families, in line with local authority guidance, to provide support to improve children's attendance at school. Senior leaders have established a breakfast club, which is funded by PEF. These interventions are having a positive impact on the attendance of individual children. The school reduced the percentage of pupils with less than 85% attendance last session from 21% to 17%. They should continue this important work.
- A few children access the school on a part-time basis, as part of a planned approach for a clear progression back to full time education. Senior leaders regularly review these plans and as a result, identified children spend increasing time in school. Where there have been instances of exclusion, staff has used these circumstances to plan appropriate supports for children in line with statutory expectations.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff celebrate children's achievements in a variety of ways across the school, including at 'gather round' assemblies, through awards and displays. Parents and carers are encouraged to nominate children for awards. As a result, children's achievements are recognised and valued across the school community.
- Most children have meaningful leadership opportunities and demonstrate increasing confidence, take responsibility and contribute positively to school life. For example, children vote on curricular activities and clubs and older pupils lead as prefects. These opportunities develop their communication, teamwork and problem-solving skills well.

- Across the school, children benefit from a wide range of music, craft and sporting activities. Senior leaders have begun to track children's participation in these activities and are now updating this regularly. They should extend this tracking approach to capture the specific skills children develop for learning, life and work. This should help children articulate their skills more clearly and staff can continue to identify and support those at risk of missing out.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and other factors which affect the lives of children and their families. The headteacher uses PEF funding appropriately to provide additional staffing. These staff help children who require additional support with literacy, numeracy and wellbeing effectively. The headteacher should now ensure that the impact of PEF funded roles and interventions are tracked more carefully to understand the extent of the impact they are having on reducing the poverty-related attainment gap.
- Senior leaders use funding from PEF, local charities and school funds to address the cost of the school day. Children and families have access to a pre-loved uniform bank, accessible outdoor clothing and additional clothing for residential trips where required. Children also experience reduced or no cost school trips, ensuring that no child misses out on opportunities due to their socio-economic circumstances.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

The enhanced support base (ESB) is located within Stenhouse Primary School. It is a local authority special unit that supports children with a range and complexity of language and communication needs. Children are selected for placement at the ESB by the City of Edinburgh Council's Education Resource Group.

The current roll in the ESB is 16 children, with age ranges of P2 through to P7, working across two classes. The ESB has two classrooms, a soft-play area, access to a secure outdoor-area and share other resources such as the 'pantry', with the main school.

The deputy headteacher has strategic and operational leadership for the ESB. In the ESB, there are two teachers, two early years practitioners (EYPs), and four pupil support workers (PSWs). The ESB accommodates children from across the City of Edinburgh.

Leadership of change

- All staff in the ESB reflect positively the school values. They work well as a team and are respectful, kind and inclusive in their interactions with children and each other. All staff act sensitively to the social, communication and development needs of the children who attend the ESB. They are committed to developing their skills to further improve the service that they offer to the children in their care.
- Senior leaders have aligned improvement planning for the ESB with the main school. All ESB staff help identify whole-school priorities and work with colleagues on planning and quality assurance. They benefit from professional learning, including work on differentiation and moderation. Senior leaders now should strengthen professional learning focused on ESB staff needs. This should help staff balance whole-school improvement priorities with developing specialist approaches that improve children's outcomes explicitly in the ESB.
- All staff have recently been involved in implementing new approaches to communicating with children. They have worked effectively with the speech and language therapy service to review routines, transitions and children's progress in communication and regulation. A few staff have visited other special schools and units to observe different learning environments. Staff should consider how to maximise available opportunities to deepen these aspects of professional development, possibly through enquiry approaches. This should support them to fully reflect on and develop further their own practice.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- Overall, the majority of children engage in planned learning according to their individual level of need. Most staff are beginning to embed new approaches that strengthen classroom structures and routines. For example, their use of song and object signifiers, alongside more consistent signs and visuals, is helping children respond to and adapt to change. In the majority of lessons, children benefit from appropriately differentiated tasks, which support improved focus and attention. Staff now need to apply interventions more consistently to continue to better meet the needs of all children.

- Staff flexibly adapt groupings to develop social, language and conversation skills for targeted groups. There are recent positive examples of how effective play-based approaches in outdoor areas are building children's social and communication skills. PSWs use games and activities very well to encourage transactional behaviour and to reinforce learning concepts such as shape and knowledge of prepositions. Staff are beginning to build individual profiles and record communicative developments in and outside the classroom.
- Teachers and EYPs use CfE early and first level national Benchmarks to show what learners know and need to be able to do. Staff also monitor children's social and communicative progress. However, current approaches to tracking and monitoring are not yet sufficiently developed. Senior leaders need to support staff to improve how they record and review children's progress. They should make more explicit the link between evidence, attainment data, moderation and planning children's next steps. There is a need for staff to design more robust individual learning programmes that accelerate children's progress.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- All children benefit from a nurturing learning environment where staff meet well their care and wellbeing needs. Relationships are strong across the ESB. Children are supported well to regulate and build resilience. All staff have undertaken appropriate training to build their skills in managing dysregulation. As a result, staff report increased confidence in de-escalating challenging behaviours. Children's needs are understood well, and staff respond promptly to early signs of dysregulation by using strategies such as movement breaks and access to sensory materials. For the current session, there are no recorded instances of restraint.
- All children have a Child's Plan which records details of agreed outcomes in an action plan. Staff adhere to current legislation and national guidance. Staff have compiled detailed risk assessment and behaviour plans. Staff consider whether Co-ordinated Support Plans (CSPs) are required, with a few children benefiting from this coordinated approach. A few children have part-time timetables. These timetables are regularly reviewed and are used to part of a planned approach for a clear progression back to full time education. As a result, these children are increasing time spent in school.
- Senior leaders and staff need to promptly review individualised plans for children in the ESB. Current Child's Plans and class plans do not provide appropriate depth and breadth in the progress that they are expecting children to make. Senior leaders and staff now need to work together to create plans with achievable, measurable and specific targets. These plans should provide a holistic overview of targets to meet children's curricular, social, communication and wellbeing needs.

Raising attainment and achievement

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy in comparison to their prior levels of attainment. Children are working towards national milestones in CfE early and first levels. Children working towards national milestones choose between a few objects and use photos and objects to make their views clear. At early level, children select and listen to familiar stories and express feelings about them. At first level, children ask and answer basic

questions in supported activities. They are not yet making notes to support their contribution to a discussion.

- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy in comparison to their prior levels of attainment. Children working towards national milestones show an awareness of start and finish by responding to signifiers such as songs and signs. At early level, children know numbers to 10 and can sequence forwards and backwards. At first level, children name and recognise 2D shapes in class and in outdoor contexts, such as in the playground. At first level, children are not yet measuring volume in litres.
- All children in the ESB are highly valued members of the school community and benefit from the inclusive environment that the school provides. Children, where appropriate, participate in outdoor play alongside their mainstream peers and benefit from community events, such as sports days and discos. A few children integrate very well into mainstream physical education classes and undertake leadership roles such as school prefects. Staff should consider how they build on these valuable opportunities, where appropriate, in the community and mainstream school. Staff celebrate well children's achievements through praise, displays and weekly 'gather round' assemblies where all ESB children, staff and senior leaders come together to recognise and acknowledge successes.

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.