HMIE | His Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in Scotland
Luchd-sgrùdaidh an Rìgh airson Foghlam ann an Alba

Summarised inspection findings

Caledonia Primary School

North Ayrshire Council

27 October 2026

Key contextual information

Caledonia Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the town of Saltcoats, North Ayrshire. The headteacher has been in post since 2019. She is supported by a depute headteacher and a principal teacher. The school roll is 217 children, split across nine classes. Two of the classes are in a composite arrangement. The school also has an early years class, serving children aged three until they start primary school. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 to 3. A majority live in SIMD deciles 1 to 2. In September 2025, the school reported that 38% of children had an identified additional support need. Staff report that this has increased to 57% of children since that date, taking the numbers above national averages.

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

- Staff foster positive, mutually respectful relationships with children. They demonstrate high levels of care and compassion for children through daily interactions. They know learners, and their families, well and use their relationships and knowlegde of children to create a calm, settled ethos for learning. Children are polite and proud of their school. Most children are interested and motivated to do well in learning.

- Most children interact with their teachers and peers respectfully. They demonstrate positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning. All teachers use classroom charters, linked well to children's rights, to set clear expectations of children. At times, a few children struggle to regulate their behaviours and emotions. Most staff use a range of strategies effectively to address these situations. This helps almost all children to settle and return to learning well. A few children, on occasion, demonstrate off-task behaviours which impact on the learning of others. All teachers should ensure they maintain high expectations of all children and follow agreed procedures to address these behaviours consistently.

- Staff ensure children are included well in all aspects of the school. They have made impactful improvements to the learning environment and their practice to help children learn in a welcoming, supportive environment. They use soft starts effectively to help children get ready to engage with learning. Teachers, pupil support assistants and support staff work together effectively to provide interventions that help children progress in their learning successfully.

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership over the development of learning, teaching and assessment across the school. She has established positive networks between staff and colleagues from neighbouring schools to develop their pedagogy and practice

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collaboratively. This has resulted in teachers sharing practice effectively, engaging in helpful professional learning and undertaking joint quality assurance visits. Teachers have used the associated learning from these activities purposefully to develop a whole-school learning and teaching policy. This is helping to develop teachers' understanding and application of high quality learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should continue this work to ensure all members of the school community understand and apply these agreed expectations. This will help them to ensure all learner experiences are of a consistently high standard.

- Almost all teachers provide clear explanations and instructions to introduce activities. A minority of teachers spend too long explaining tasks to the whole class and would benefit from moving activities forward at a brisker pace. Most teachers use questions well to check for children's understanding and to help them to make links with prior learning. A few teachers use questions skilfully to challenge children to think deeply about their learning and to extend their higher order thinking skills. This practice should be developed further across the school.

- Most teachers share the purpose of learning routinely with children and a majority share explicit measures of success. This helps a majority of children to understand what and how they are learning well. A majority of teachers are beginning to support children to identify the skills that they develop through their learning. Teachers should extend this further and focus on ensuring children understand and communicate the skills they develop over time. This will help children to develop further a range of skills for learning, life and work, and to link their learning to a range of real-life contexts and situations.

- Most children respond positively to stimulating classrooms and enjoy learning in different shared open areas across the building. They are particularly motivated during well-planned and regular opportunities to learn outdoors. A majority of teachers provide children with valuable opportunities to exercise personalisation and choice, and to demonstrate greater independence, in learning. As an important next step, a majority of teachers should consider how to increase pace in learning for all children. They should accelerate children's progress by maxmising the purposeful use of all of the time available throughout the school day. A minority of children require increased challenge to ensure they maximise their learning and progress.

- Staff have developed well their use of play for younger children. Teachers use learning spaces creatively to enhance children's experiences. Children benefit from a range of well-planned activities that encourages them to be curious and creative in their play. Teachers should refine further their use of child-initiated, teacher-initiated and teacher-directed play to ensure the balance meets the needs of all children.

- Most teachers use an appropriate range of assessments, including summative, standardised and observations, to measure children's progress in learning. They use national Benchmarks well to assess children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. A majority of teachers use a range of strategies to monitor children's understanding robustly and to provide feedback. Most teachers provide children with regular, helpful oral feedback. They have recently improved how they provide written feedback on children's writing. This includes using common areas of feedback to inform their planning of future teaching. As a result, teachers directly address and amend children's misunderstandings or errors in learning purposefully. These approaches should be extended to other curriculum areas. Teachers should also develop further children's ability to reflect on learning and set targets for next steps.

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- Staff have developed highly effective and comprehensive assessment approaches which take account of children's needs. They identify barriers to children achieving success in assessments and work proactively to address them. As a result, increasing numbers of children who require support demonstrate their skills or knowledge successfully through a range of assessments.

- All teachers engage in helpful moderation activities regularly in and beyond the school. This is strengthening their shared understanding and application of national standards. Senior leaders should continue to extend opportunities for moderation across all curriculum areas, including the planned revisit of children's writing.

- Teachers plan learning collaboratively with stage partners and over a range of timescales. This helps them to provide children with well-planned learning experiences, building on previous learning. Teachers developed progression pathways for literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and digital literacy to plan progressive and relevant learning. They also map the coverage of national Benchmarks across the curriclum appropriately. Teachers should continue to develop planning approaches within and across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels, with a focus on extending the progress of children requiring increased challenge.

- Children at all stages learn Spanish and children from P5 to P7 learn French. A majority of children speak Spanish confidently. Staff are focusing on improving their reading and writing skills, as identified from moderation work with the local secondary.

- Most teachers support children to engage meaningfully with aspects of planning. Increasingly, children are asked to identify what they know, would like to know and how they would like to learn for aspects of learning. This helps children to take greater ownership of their learning.

- Senior leaders and teachers track and monitor children's progress in learning robustly. The headteacher provides detailed analysis of attainment data and works with staff to evaluate progress over time. They use this information to identify children and cohorts of learners who are not on track in their learning. Staff then effectively plan timely and targeted interventions for those who require it. Importantly, staff systematically monitor the impact of interventions and adjust their approaches to ensure positive outcomes. These strong systems ensure children make very good progress in their learning.

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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.

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3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	very good

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

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

- The headteacher and staff demonstrate a sustained and purposeful focus on overcoming barriers to children achieving or attaining effectively. The school's highly effective approaches to identifying children who require support with their learning and providing well-considered interventions is a major strength of the school. As a result of robust monitoring and tracking, early interventions and the systematic monitoring of the impact and outcomes achieved through targeted support, almost all children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Most children across the school achieved appropriate CfE levels in reading, writing and numeracy in P1, P4 and P7 in June 2026. Almost all children in P1, P4 and P7 attained nationally expected CfE levels in listening and talking.

- Almost all children who require additional support in their learning make very strong progress towards their individual targets and milestones. They excel through highly appropriate targeted group and individual interventions.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Almost all children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. Children's very positive progress is supported by effective teaching of literacy skills, targeted support and timely early interventions. Staff engaged in high quality professional learning relating to teaching reading and writing. As a result of new approaches adopted, children's skills and attainment has improved.

- Staff use a consistent and effective approach to writing that progressively develops children's vocabulary, sentence structure and organisation of ideas successfully. This helps most children to write confidently and produce text of a high quality. Teachers should continue to extend opportunities for children to write more independently across a range of genres. This will help children to demonstrate increasing confidence in transferring and applying writing skills.

- Staff's focus on developing children's reading is developing their comprehension skills and increasing children's engagement and enjoyment of reading. Children regularly access a wide range of interesting and engaging texts from their inviting and inclusive library space.

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This is developing a strong culture of reading across the school community and enhancing children's literacy skills. Teachers should continue to encourage children to link the opportunities that have to apply their literacy skills across all aspects of their learning. This will help them to understand the importance of literacy in a range of learning contexts.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Most children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. They apply their numeracy skills very well in a range of relevant contexts.

- Most children demonstrate a strong understanding of mathematical concepts, such as number, shape, measure and information handing. Across all stages, almost all children have a good understanding of number processes and complete a range of written calculations with accuracy. Teachers should continue to extend children's problem solving strategies through increasingly complex challenges across different contexts. This will help children to apply their knowledge and skills more effectively. Children at first and second level would benefit from developing their understanding and application of fractions and angles. Teachers should continue to revisit and reinforce key learning in these areas through well-planned cross-curricular opportunities and enquiry-based learning experiences.

Attainment over time

- Over the past three years, children have achieved consistently high standards in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have established a culture of evidence-informed improvement. Senior leaders and staff monitor and track children's progress and attainment robustly and systematically. They meet regularly to scrutinise the data gathered from literacy and numeracy assessments and to plan interventions that support children's high levels of attainment. Staff use data effectively to identify individuals and groups requiring targeted interventions, including those with barriers to learning. They are providing more timely interventions, as a result. This is leading to sustained improvements in children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy over time.

- Importantly, staff identify indicators of barriers to learning for children at the earliest possible stages as a key strategy to raising attainment. This proactive approach ensures children's needs are identified and met early and effectively. For example, staff's highly effective approaches to ensuring assessments are adapted appropriately to meet children's needs. This ensures children are able to demonstrate their knowledge or skills equitably.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff celebrate children's achievements effectively through assemblies, newsletters and displays. This creates a strong culture of recognition and helps children to develop their confidence and self-esteem.

- Children develop leadership and wider skills through a range of varied opportunities in and beyond the classroom. Children in P7 are trained to deliver after-school sports clubs to their peers, developing their communication and organisational skills. Younger children develop interpersonal skills and personal interests through committees and clubs, including Coding Club and Arts and Crafts.

- Senior leaders and staff track children's participation in achievements effectively. They identify well children who participate less frequently or are at risk of missing out on

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achievements. Senior leaders work closely with families to understand barriers to participation, and provide appropriate and well-considered support to overcome these. As a result, most children access a broad range of experiences and achievements. Staff identify appropriately the need to develop approaches to tracking children's skills and skill progression through their achievements and learning. This will help children to communicate their skills more confidently and to recognise their relevance to their progress and lives.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff understand the socio-economic circumstances affecting children and families very well. They are committed to ensuring equity for all learners. They work effectively to identify and address barriers to learning, participation and achievement. Staff and partners work together very effectively to ensure children and families receive appropriate additional support to access learning and wider opportunities.

- The headteacher has a detailed and clear strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) which is regularly shared with the Parent Council. She has used PEF to purchase resources and additional staffing to support children through targeted and universal interventions. As a result, identified children have improved their readiness to learn, sense of inclusion, attendance, as well as developed their literacy and numeracy skills. Staff demonstrate through robust evidence that interventions are supporting positive outcomes for identified children. Staff demonstrate well that interventions are accelerating children's progress and attainment.

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Other relevant evidence

- In 2025/26, the school's attendance was 91.2%, in line with the national average. Attendance has increased slightly over the past three years. Staff have supported a reduction in children who are persistently absent with attendance below 90% through a sustained focus on improved attendance. The headteacher identifies term-time family holidays as impact on attendance. They use attendance data effectively to identify concerns early and provide targeted support. They work closely with families and partner agencies to understand and address barriers to attendance. Attendance incentives such as soft-starts and sensory circuits have helped to reduce children's anxiety. Staff use clubs that interest learners and reward systems to increase children's motivation and attendance at school. There is evidence that attendance has improved for most children targeted for support, including those affected by socio-economic challenges.

- Staff and the Parent Council identify approaches to reduce the cost of the school day. For example, by providing fundraising to provide additional learning resources. Staff also work effectively with children who form the eco committee to maintain a stock of 'good as new' uniform and other seasonal clothing. Children explain how this approach supports the school's sustainability goals whilst providing support to the local community.

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Minor areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

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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.

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