

Summarised inspection findings

Carolside Primary School

East Renfrewshire Council

10 September 2024

Key contextual information

Carolside Primary School is a non-denominational school serving communities in the Clarkston area of East Renfrewshire. The school is part of the Williamwood High School cluster of schools. At the time of inspection, 601 children attended the school over 22 classes. This year, the Carolside Communication Support Service (CCSS) opened to support children who require intensive additional support. Currently, children in P1 attend the CCSS and this will expand in future.

The headteacher has been in post for over seven years. He is supported by a deputy headteacher, an acting deputy headteacher and five principal teachers.

Attendance is generally above the national average and there are zero exclusions. Over 90% of children reside in SIMD deciles 9 and 10.

Carolside 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

excellent

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

- The headteacher has worked very effectively with staff, parents, children and partners to build an ambitious vision for Carolside Primary School. This vision prioritises high quality relationships and effective learning and teaching. It is understood well across the school community. The school's values of respect, friendship and honesty are embedded in relationships within the school and its wider community of families and partners. Children articulate very clearly how these values relate to their school experiences and the values are regularly identified and celebrated by children and staff.
- The headteacher demonstrates outstanding strategic leadership. Supported by a highly effective leadership team, he leads and manages change exceptionally skilfully and successfully. He is highly respected by children, parents, staff and partners. The headteacher's leadership is supportive, considered and authentic. He has been very successful in creating and embedding a culture where all members of the school community are empowered to be active and collaborative leaders of change. There is a strong, shared determination across the staff to ensure that the interests of children are at the heart of all decisions and actions. As a result, almost all staff are initiating change which results in improved outcomes for children.
- The school's shared vision informs improvement planning very effectively. Senior leaders use the vision's twin strands of relationships and learning and teaching to ensure there is a clear and consistent sense of direction for the school community. This allows local and national priorities to be balanced very well along with improvement areas appropriate to the school's unique context and which benefit their learners.
- School leaders' genuine involvement of a wide range of stakeholders in setting and evaluating school priorities exemplifies very best practice. For example, the School Improvement Working Party meets for a number of dedicated days through each school year. Members include the leadership team, members of the Parent Council, members of the Pupil Parliament and a range of other staff, learners, parents and partners. The Group reviews school, local and national data collaboratively. It uses the information gathered to review improvement priorities and sets new priorities. This is a highly effective approach which ensures that improvement planning is carefully focused on the school community's own needs for the coming session. Throughout improvement work, the headteacher ensures that the strategic direction and pace of change are managed highly effectively and systematically.
- Senior leaders have recently reviewed and made changes to the use of Professional Review and Development (PRD) for staff. These changes have enabled a better link to whole school improvements and the improvement calendar but still allow for individual innovation. As a result, the quality and pace of change has further improved, allowing faster and wider implementation of improvements which benefit learners. For example, individual staff's very effective use of personalised targets made with children in every class.

- Staff leadership is very effective, meaningful and embedded in the culture of Carolside Primary School. The headteacher has ensured that a positive, ambitious and supportive learning environment exists not only for children but also for staff. This is a 'safe space' for staff to share different ideas and approaches to professional practice. All teachers take ownership of initiatives and leadership roles. The headteacher models well this distributive approach to leadership. This allows staff to test and develop their own leadership skills. For example, the effectiveness of this culture of staff leadership has been highly effective in the development of new approaches to pedagogy across the school and also the introduction of the new Carolside Communication Support Service (CCSS). A culture of empowered, independent and effective staff leadership has been embedded well. As a result, staff have successfully identified and progressed very significant, new whole-school improvements to benefit children without the headteacher's direct involvement.
- Children play a key role in the leadership of change. Their views and opinions are sought actively, regularly and systematically. A wide range of children from every year group are involved in 13 different committees across the school. A Pupil Council includes elected representatives from every class, to gather children's views. The work of these committees has led directly to developments in the work of the school which reflect children's priorities. For example, peer mediation training and changes to teaching approaches and content. This strong culture of a meaningful pupil voice permeates the daily work of the school. For example, children enjoy making choices in their learning. They also have regular opportunities to lead their own learning and support their peers. The Pupil Parliament meets regularly with senior leaders and is active in the leadership and development of the school. For example, Parliament members regularly use the document, 'How good is OUR school?', to evaluate the work of the school in learning and teaching. This has included learning walks, learning visits and focus groups. It has led to changes in how children's work is celebrated and how different year groups have engaged with enquiry-based learning. Overall, a highly successful, systematic and meaningful approach to children's leadership of change has been established in Carolside Primary School.
- Staff have a clear understanding of the local community and the social, economic and cultural context of their learners. They use this knowledge very successfully to ensure that they are responsive to children's needs. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to allow staff to further support identified children with interventions such as nurture and more regular engagement with families who may benefit from further support.
- Led by the headteacher, staff make very effective use of research and professional learning to support effective and meaningful change. These approaches are exceptionally strong and are embedded in the school's culture. Almost all staff use professional learning highly effectively to improve their practice. Staff proactively work with colleagues to identify areas for development or fresh approaches to professional practice. High quality professional learning is then used to research and consider new approaches. Staff look inward to learn from each other through learning sets and professional reading groups. They also look outwards to learn from other schools, organisations and local authorities. A few staff are supported by the school to engage in learning at university level. Staff are careful to undertake small tests of change based upon the outcomes of their research and learning. Systems are in place to share and implement successfully new approaches. This also allows whole school priorities to be effectively taken forward. For example, all staff have undertaken practitioner enquiries relating to pedagogy or relationships and these approaches have supported the creation of the CCSS. As a result of this collaborative staff learning culture, children have benefited from a wide range of new developments. For example, improvements in enquiry approaches for children, creative learning, trauma-informed practice, and improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy.

- The headteacher is constantly outward-looking and proactive in seeking partnerships that support the school to improve. As a result, school staff actively support system-wide improvement at cluster and local authority level and beyond. For example, staff from other schools from a range of local authorities continue to visit Carolside Primary School regularly to learn more about approaches to enquiry and play pedagogy. Staff work with Education Scotland, the University of Strathclyde and the West Partnership to share their experiences and professional practice to support system improvement. The headteacher supports approaches to school leadership at local authority level. Approaches to pedagogy, tracking and monitoring and transition have been used at local authority level to support other schools. This strong commitment to look outwards further reinforces the strength of the positive and ambitious culture now sustainably embedded in Carolside Primary School.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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

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

- Staff successfully maintain a nurturing, learning environment that places relationships at the centre of children's experiences. A very welcoming and supportive ethos is evident in all classrooms. Almost all children are polite, confident and keen to learn. They exercise their right to have a say in how they will learn through the process of creating class charters together with teachers and peers.
- In all classes, staff encourage children to lead their own learning through well planned opportunities to learn individually. Children regularly investigate topics to find answers to engaging questions and areas of study. They feel empowered to play an active part in both their learning and decision-making processes. This helps children to take responsibility for their learning. It also helps them to develop problem-solving skills, analyse information and make informed decisions. In all classes children also work together in teams. They communicate positively and share responsibilities. This approach is well-established across the school.
- Learning activities in almost all lessons take very good account of the motivations and interests of children. Children engage with stimulating activities and are encouraged to think independently. As a result, almost all children are actively engaged in their learning. Children who require additional assistance in learning are supported well in planned activities and by direct support from teachers and pupil support assistants. As planned, staff should develop further approaches to ensuring that learners who exceed expectations are fully challenged. Staff are very well placed to build on existing effective practice in the school and further develop these approaches more widely.
- A group of staff are currently piloting a new approach to planning cross-curricular learning. Through this approach, staff involve children meaningfully in planning learning and seek and act on children's views. As a result, children experience learning which is relevant, meaningful and purposeful. Staff are well placed to continue to develop this approach across all classes, as planned.
- In almost all lessons, staff use a wide range of approaches to teaching and support which provide children with positive learning experiences. Almost all teachers make highly effective use of a local authority framework for learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers design learning experiences for children which respond well to their changing needs.
- Almost all teachers use skilled questioning to check for understanding. In the most effective lessons, teachers use questions very constructively to develop children's thinking skills.
- In all lessons, teachers share what is to be learned and how children can be successful. This is linked to the use of personalised targets to ensure children remain on-track. In the majority of lessons, children are involved in the co-creation of effective and meaningful ways in which they

can be successful. They can articulate this well and it helps them to self-evaluate progress. This is supported well in almost all lessons by effective direct feedback from teachers to children on their progress.

- Teachers are providing rich learning opportunities for almost all learners through the creation of play and enquiry-based approaches to learning and teaching. As a result, staff have now developed structured, yet independent, learning environments through the middle and upper stages. This is helping children to develop as confident individuals and successful learners. Most teachers design tasks well to reflect real-life situations where children can contextualise and apply their learning. For example, P1 children are learning about how the human heart operates through creating a working model.
- Teachers are developing approaches to using outdoor learning to enhance further children's learning experiences. For example, children in P1 to P3 use the Secret Garden and Nature Lab to apply, consolidate and extend their learning through meaningful outdoor activities. For these lessons, teachers successfully link outdoor learning activities to children's literacy and numeracy targets. This is supporting children well to learn in creative and practical ways which promote enjoyment and engagement in learning. Senior leaders and staff should further develop more consistent approaches to outdoor learning for older children within the school.
- Children use digital technology very well to support their learning. For example, they are developing their independent skills successfully through regular visits to the digihub. A few children are digital leaders, who develop and support their peers' skills in digital learning.
- Almost all teachers use a broad range of assessment approaches. They do this very effectively to inform planning for learners and report regularly on their progress. All teachers engage regularly in collaborative, high-quality moderation activities with colleagues, local schools and local authority moderation processes. They regularly moderate their approaches to planning and assessment and share standards. Staff also share effective practice in assessment and in the observation of lessons. They plan to increase the number of in-school opportunities for staff to engage in moderation activity. As a next step, senior leaders recognise that they should now provide opportunities for all staff to develop moderation across more areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers use valid assessment data including Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) alongside moderation and other standardised data to provide a clear and reliable overview of children's progress and attainment. Children receive regular helpful opportunities to self-assess and peer assess their progress.
- All children have frequent opportunities to reflect on their progress through engaging in daily and weekly target-setting. This is helping them to understand better their next steps in learning and what they have to do to be successful. Staff and children are developing links between their learning and identifiable skills. These include growth mindset, creativity, critical thinking and communication skills. Children celebrate their successful use of these skills through receiving skills certificates, presented at assemblies.
- Staff maintain detailed records of children's progress and attainment over time, gathering information from a range of sources. Senior leaders and staff have undertaken a recent review of how teachers' use this data to plan learning. As a result, a few teachers have introduced new approaches to forward planning. These include the use of new planning, assessment and recording tools. These newly developed tools map out and record assessments of experiences and learning outcomes taught in each class across a level. As planned, staff should now ensure that these are used consistently in all classes. This should further help teachers plan a breadth of learning experiences across the curriculum.

- Senior leaders analyse rigorously, the wide range of information about the progress of individual and groups of children. This includes considering information about the attainment and progress of children who experience barriers to learning. This is helping staff to ensure the specific needs of children are met effectively. Senior leaders hold regular attainment meetings with each class teacher. Together, they review the individual progress of each child, identifying whether children are on track with their learning or need extra support. Senior leaders and staff use the wide range of worthwhile data they collect very effectively to pinpoint inequity and any gaps in children's learning. Together, they plan carefully the interventions and targeted support necessary to support all children's learning successfully.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have reviewed the school's curriculum rationale to take more account of play and enquiry approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment. Staff have developed well organised learning environments and plan carefully across all curricular areas using progressive learning pathways. As a result, children are developing as successful and independent learners. They lead their own learning, effectively.
- Staff consistently use a range of learning pathways across all curricular areas. These pathways enable staff to plan learning which offers breadth, depth and relevance for children as they move through the school. As planned, the staff team should embed a learning pathway for outdoor learning across all stages.
- Teachers use progression pathways common to the local authority in curricular areas such as physical education, modern languages, literacy and numeracy. All children receive their entitlement to religious education, physical education and modern languages.
- All children learn music from P1 and children in P3 and P4 receive additional learning experiences from a music specialist. A few children benefit from individual or small group music tutoring. This is encouraging children to have an early interest in music and is developing their creativity skills.
- Staff plan curricular transitions at key points very effectively. Staff work collaboratively to ensure detailed transition information is shared in order that all learners can continue to make progress at an appropriate pace. Children in P7 benefit from a well-planned transition programme to secondary school. This includes various activities led by secondary teachers and visits to the secondary school. As a result, children report feeling confident and very well prepared to make the transition to their next stage of learning.
- Staff are at an early stage of implementing education around skills consistently across the school. There is a focus on growth mindsets, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. A next step for staff would be to include this within forward plans to enhance this approach further. Making explicit reference to skills in planning of learning and teaching will ensure children have opportunities to make better connections between their learning and skills for learning, life, and work.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- There are major strengths in approaches to parental engagement. This has been a recent area for development and school staff have worked well with families to build constructive relationships. Parents are enthusiastic supporters of the school and the work of the staff to support their child's learning and wellbeing. They feel that school leaders are visible, approachable and honest. Almost all parents feel that their child is treated fairly and with respect and that staff really know their child as an individual.
- The headteacher consults parents regularly on school improvement, gathering suggestions and feedback across a wide range of areas. Commendably, the Parent Council is involved in setting and evaluating school improvement and development priorities as part of the School Improvement Working Party. This helps to ensure that the ongoing improvement work of the school is informed effectively by parents' views. The Parent Teacher Association also actively supports the school through activity such as fundraising.
- Parents appreciate updates on their children's learning through regular newsletters, online blogs and social media. Parents report that curriculum evenings and other opportunities to meet with staff help to give them a greater understanding of what their child is learning. A few parents report that they would like more information to help them understand how their child is progressing. Children benefit from parental involvement in school activities such as sports clubs and pupil committee work.

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

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

- Staff use and promote the school's vision of being 'a happy and safe school', where 'everyone is treated with respect and kindness' very effectively. This is at the heart of a highly effective wellbeing strategy that ensures that children's wellbeing has a very high profile across the school. Staff and children maintain a continuous focus on promoting wellbeing through a range of well-considered approaches. This includes informative assemblies, impactful wellbeing committees led by learners, a progressive and responsive health and wellbeing curriculum, successful whole school events, and helpful wall displays. Children use the language of wellbeing regularly and are supported and encouraged by staff to maintain positive wellbeing.
- Children's wellbeing is supported very effectively by staff and peers. Senior leaders and staff have developed strong communications and trusting relationships with families. This is identifying and addressing children's emotional needs timeously and effectively so that children can maintain focus on their learning. Senior leaders support the wellbeing of staff thoughtfully so that they are well-placed to promote children's wellbeing effectively. As a result, most children report that they can seek support from an extensive range of staff and they are confident that they will receive a prompt and effective response. Staff are proactively further developing a wider range of ways for all children to identify wellbeing concerns.
- Almost all children report that they feel safe in school. They believe that staff's high visibility and approachability around the school helps them to be safe. They learn how to keep themselves safe through the well-planned health and wellbeing curriculum as well as through useful initiatives. These help children to make informed decisions on how to remain safe in school, the community and online. A few children use this learning to demonstrate responsibility in helping others increase their understanding of how to be safe.
- There has been a successful focus on ensuring children develop a sound understanding of how to be healthy. Staff ensure that children are active. Children demonstrate a well-developed knowledge of how a balanced diet and regular exercise can benefit their long-term health. Children are developing a thorough knowledge of the importance of managing positive sleep habits, dealing with stress and self-care to improve their mental wellbeing. Children speak openly about emotional wellbeing and continue to reduce the stigma associated with mental health.
- Staff fulfil their statutory duties very well. They involve children and their families thoughtfully to plan meticulously in getting it right for every child. Children's needs and strategies for support are captured through a well-established and robust planning process. Senior leaders maintain a comprehensive overview of children's wellbeing and learning needs and provide quality information that is used consistently by staff to support children effectively. Children who face potential barriers to their learning are monitored closely by staff to ensure they make appropriate progress. Children benefit from a range of well-considered in-house supports from

a highly skilled teaching and support staff. Staff employ well-judged and impactful interventions, using an extensive range of partners to support children with their wellbeing and learning needs. Staff review these approaches thoroughly to ensure that children maintain progress. As a result, children with additional support needs make very good progress in their learning. Senior leaders should continue to build on the success of supporting staff in developing fully inclusive classrooms.

- Almost all children feel included in the life of the school and display positive behaviour. Staff model respectful relationships to children, implementing skills from undertaking local authority professional learning in nurture and trauma-informed practice. Their nurturing approach is reducing anxiety in children. Staff respond swiftly and calmly, in line with the school values, to the few children who display dysregulated behaviours. Staff adopt a rights-based, restorative approach to promoting positive relations and behaviour, captured well in their strategy agreed by stakeholders. Children are clear that restorative approaches mean they feel supported effectively to reflect on and improve their behaviour. Children are helped by staff sensitively to regulate their emotions and remain included in class. As a result, no children have been excluded from school.
- Almost all children maintain very high levels of attendance at school. Attendance has been substantially above national averages for many years. Staff monitor children's attendance carefully and support families sensitively. A few children are supported well to sustain regular attendance to school through approaches by family liaison staff. Most children supported through these initiatives are significantly improving their attendance and engagement in school.
- Senior leaders ensure that bullying is managed, recorded and monitored in line with national guidance. Most children agree that others treat them with respect. Children in the upper stages receive training as peer mediators to help fellow learners deal successfully with relationship issues. Senior leaders are aware that a minority of children feel that the school does not always deal well with bullying. They should continue with plans to help all children understand fully the school's response to bullying.
- Almost all children report that staff help them to understand and respect the differences of others. A group of children lead within a well-established committee to raise awareness of equalities through a range of initiatives centred around children's rights. The rights-based approach is visible and well promoted regularly throughout the school through approaches such as helpful class charters. Children have developed significantly their understanding of rights and those of others. This results in children learning in a respectful and inclusive environment.
- Children celebrate diversity and enhance their awareness of other faiths through the religious education curriculum, assemblies and whole school events. Children are articulate in describing how their learning increases their knowledge about the perspectives of others and how this is helping them to be global citizens. Children who have joined the school from other countries are welcomed by peers and quickly become valued members of the school community. Children in the equalities group have improved the knowledge of peers by leading high-profile campaigns to help refugees, observe Black History month, and by promoting anti-racist initiatives. Staff have undertaken professional learning to build racial literacy and continue to increase children's awareness of cultural diversity through the curriculum.
- Children have developed a strong awareness of groups who face barriers to their rights being respected as a result of poverty or disability. Children use their learning about equalities to show empathy for others who face discrimination. Almost all children are resolute in feeling empowered to challenge discrimination. Senior leaders should continue to develop further

children’s understanding of all aspects of equality and diversity, including their plans to help children understand differences in peers who are neurodiverse.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Almost all children attain nationally expected CfE levels for reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. A majority of children are exceeding expected national levels of attainment in literacy and a minority in numeracy. Overall, children's attainment outcomes are consistently above local authority and national averages.
- Almost all children who receive additional support for their learning make very good progress against their individual targets for learning. A majority are achieving nationally expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment and children's progress in literacy and English is very good.

Listening and Talking

- Almost all children at early level participate actively in songs, rhymes and stories. They follow simple instructions well and respond to questioning with confidence and enthusiasm. Almost all children at first level, are articulate and have an increasingly extensive vocabulary. They listen attentively to each other and build on the ideas of their peers. They ask relevant questions and can clarify and summarise their thinking. Almost all children at second level, contribute relevant ideas to discussions, can justify their opinions confidently and offer alternative points of view respectfully. They demonstrate a high level of interest and enthusiasm when conversing with known staff, visitors and children. Across all levels, children apply their talking and listening skills very well in a variety of contexts.

Reading

- Almost all children at early level use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words successfully. They use images in texts well to support their understanding where appropriate. They are developing skills in using their growing knowledge of sight vocabulary to read aloud texts in books with accuracy. Almost all children at first level, read aloud familiar texts with fluency and increasing expression. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They are developing their use of punctuation and grammar. Almost all children at second level, can explain their preferences for particular texts, genres and authors. They talk with increasing detail about characters, setting and plot. They use a range of reading skills such as skimming, scanning and summarising to support successfully their understanding of different texts. Teachers should continue to provide opportunities for children to create different types of questions to show their understanding of different texts.

Writing

- Almost all children at early level write for enjoyment, exploring patterns and sounds, in a range of play, imaginative and real contexts. They are growing in confidence in spelling familiar words

correctly. Almost all children at first level punctuate sentences accurately and create texts using adjectives, adverbs, connectives, and similes. They use paragraphs to structure their writing. Almost all children at second level, write for a variety of purposes and in different contexts across the curriculum. For example, children use Scots language in poetry and create leaflets, discursive essays and personal blogs. Almost all children engage the reader with their use of interesting vocabulary and accurate use of punctuation.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment and children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is very good.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all children at early level successfully share out a group of items equally into smaller groups. They accurately recognise coins to £2. They are building their confidence in mental agility adding and subtracting within 10. Almost all children at first level round whole numbers confidently to the nearest 10 and 100. They accurately tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to using analogue and digital clocks. They are developing their understanding of equivalent fractions. Almost all children at second level successfully solve simple algebraic equations with one variable. They recognise the equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions, and percentages. They are developing their skills in problem solving contexts including those that are related to time durations.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level recognise three-dimensional objects. They are exploring ways to sort these objects according to various simple criteria including round, flat and curved. Almost all children at first level use the correct mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of common three-dimensional objects including face, edge and vertex. They are developing their understanding of direction using words associated with angles, including turn, clockwise and anti-clockwise. Children at second level use accurately mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex. They successfully identify and illustrate lines of symmetry on a range of two-dimensional shapes.

Information handling

- Almost all children at early level successfully use pictorial displays to present data. They are developing their skills in interpreting simple graphs and charts. Almost all children at first level successfully sort data from class surveys and display findings on simple bar charts. Children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their information handling skills using digital technology to support their learning. Almost all children at second level collect, organise, and display data accurately in a range of ways including using tables, bar graphs, and line graphs. They will benefit from continuing to analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from a range of increasingly complex data sets, including those presented in pie charts.

Attainment over time

- Overall, children's attainment in recent years has remained very strong. Teachers use national Benchmarks effectively, along with a range of valid assessment data, to make judgements about children's progress and attainment. Staff have engaged in a range of effective moderation activities in school, across the cluster and across the local authority. This has increased the accuracy of teacher professional judgements around achievement of a curriculum for excellence level.
- Senior leaders and teachers use a robust tracking system very effectively to monitor the progress of individuals, groups and cohorts of children in literacy and numeracy. They have a clear focus on raising attainment in literacy and numeracy for all children. Children who may benefit from additional support to remain on track are identified and provided with prompt

additional support if required. Senior leaders monitor these children more regularly to ensure that planned interventions are resulting in progress in children's learning. This is helping all children to make very good progress in their planned learning. School data shows that children maintain their progress well as they move through the school. Data demonstrates consistently high levels of attainment and achievement over time, achieved by confident and responsible children. Teachers and support staff provide a range of very effective targeted interventions which have helped to raise children's attainment. Senior leaders should now explore and develop approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress across all curricular areas. This should help identify trends and gaps in children's learning across the curriculum and further enhance current approaches to teachers' planning for children's learning.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Almost all children talk positively about the wide range of activities and clubs available across the school, including sports, choir, scripture union and coding. Almost all children in the school participate in physical activity within or outwith school and talk confidently about how this keeps them healthy and active. Senior leaders track the participation of children's involvement in sporting activities in and out of school. This allows senior leaders to identify and support and encourage children who do not participate. A next step for senior leaders would be to track the involvement of children in other activities outwith sport.
- Children appreciate the recognition and celebration of their out-of-school achievement in classes, assemblies, online and on the achievement wall. Senior leaders track these achievements. For example, a minority of children represent or compete in sports activities at a local or national level outwith school.
- A few children are developing their confidence and leadership skills through starting and leading clubs in the school, such as sports leaders, emotional wellbeing leaders and the newly formed friendship club. These roles could be expanded further to include more children.
- Children in P4-P7 use personal profiles effectively to record and reflect on their own successes and achievements. A next step for senior leaders would be to systematically track the skills that children are developing through their wider achievement opportunities. This would further support teachers to plan opportunities for children to apply their skills in different contexts.

Equity for all learners

- All staff know their children very well and have a good awareness of equity for families. As a result, all children are supported very well to achieve their best outcomes.
- Senior leaders use PEF (Pupil Equity Funding) to support attendance and wellbeing of a few children. A Family Learning Teacher is employed to work with small groups and individuals. Interventions around social skills, emotional wellbeing, and nurture are improving the attendance, engagement, and wellbeing of these children. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the impact of all interventions, with a particular focus on the school community's unique attainment gap.
- Senior leaders track the attainment and progress of different cohorts of children and discuss this at termly tracking meetings. This allows senior leaders to put appropriate interventions in place where required. Overall, almost all children who may be impacted by socio-economic disadvantage are on track in their learning.
- Children for whom English is an additional language are supported well by staff. Teachers use translation tools and software to support their learning in class. As a result, all children for whom English is an additional language are meeting or exceeding expectations.

Other relevant evidence

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised 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. At the time of the inspection, there were minor areas for improvement identified. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food in school.
- Senior leaders and staff are committed to ensuring there is no cost to families for curricular activities. Where costs occur for extra-curricular activities, children and their families can apply discreetly for funding to support access to these opportunities. Senior leaders have consulted with parents on the main costs of the school day. In response to the cost of uniform, parents and staff have worked together to provide a very well used sustainable uniform tree. This has been expanded to include other equipment and clothing for the P7 residential trip. Staff also supply digital devices to those who require them to make sure they can access home learning on online platforms. This is supporting children to achieve at home. In addition, the removal of costs to school shows and events has resulted in an increase of attendance at these events by the school community.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

Carolside Communication Support Service (CCSS) was established in August 2023 in response to the 2022 East Renfrewshire Additional Support for Learning Review. Nine P1 children attend the service. All children are registered with their catchment school and are granted a place through the Education Resource Group (ERG). All children require significant additional support and almost all have autism. There are plans to increase the roll of the CCSS next session. Around half of the children also attend their mainstream catchment school for a portion of the week. A deputy headteacher and principal teacher lead the growing staff team, which includes class teachers, pupils support assistants and child development officers.

Leadership of change

- The experienced and supportive staff team work well together to help children learn and develop in a nurturing, caring environment. All staff uphold the school vision, which emphasises effective learning and teaching through caring and respectful relationships. In a short time, senior leaders have successfully implemented this new and effective service. It is evolving responsively to the needs of children, their families and the learning community. Senior leaders should now begin to review with stakeholders the vision, values and aims to ensure that they remain relevant for the CCSS.
- Senior leaders work collaboratively with the local authority to devise well-judged plans for the development of the CCSS. Prior to its establishment, the school and local authority consulted widely and effectively to gain the views of parents and members of the local community. As a result, senior leaders have the support of the school community to strive for continuous improvement.
- Parents value the clear communication from staff. The regular exchange of information gives parents confidence about their child's wellbeing and helps them support their child's learning.
- Staff undertake important leadership roles which have a positive impact across the whole school. For example, child development officers recently used their specialist training to make signage consistent and visible across the school. This is helping children make more sense of their environment and reduces stress for children with additional support needs.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- All staff demonstrate a clear commitment to providing the best possible learning experiences. They understand children's sensory tolerances and provide stimulating yet comfortable activities. Teachers recognise children's individual strengths and special interests. They set appropriately challenging, individualised activities.
- All staff make effective use of a variety of school-based spaces. The well equipped 'blue room' has a sensory carpet, climbing and tumbling area. Children play, exercise and use sensory activities to self-regulate. Teachers use resources creatively to arrange calm spaces, exploratory play areas and zones for focusing on writing or mark-making. This allows teachers to work one-to-one with children who have significant sensory requirements.
- Teachers set up stimulating areas for children to explore their environment and learn through play as outlined in national guidance. Children develop their physical and social skills very well during free play and their fine motor skills through purposeful loose parts play.
- Children have access to a small but safe, purpose-built outdoor area. Senior leaders and staff should consider ways to expand children's access to green spaces and increase the range of

contexts children experience. For example, when appropriate, children should attend school trips, assemblies or shows.

- Teachers meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss progress and decide on suitable supports for children. Teachers make detailed plans and use the Foundation Milestones or national Benchmarks to help assess children's progress. Where children attend a mainstream provision alongside the CCSS, their targets should reflect the aims of their home school. This will ensure that establishments understand, outline and work towards the unique aspects of their provision.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- All staff have children's wellbeing at the heart of their practice. Staff assure children's safety through thorough discussion about children's health with families and relevant partners. All children have comprehensive wellbeing plans, which are reviewed twice per year, or more frequently as necessary. This helps staff respond to children's needs and plan appropriate support.
- Children are energetic and lively. They enjoy being included in activities with their peers and are learning to play in groups. Children are developing secure friendships at school. They have trusting relationships with all staff. They communicate their feelings and make choices through gesture, speech or by using symbols.
- Children experience a smooth transition from Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) into P1. Teachers work in close partnership with ELC colleagues and Educational Psychologists. They plan carefully to ensure that staff meet children's needs effectively.
- Senior leaders understand well their statutory duties. Children have access to physical education twice per week. Attendance is high and senior leaders monitor this effectively.
- Around half of children attend lessons with mainstream peers. Children enjoy being included in their catchment schools. Senior leaders consistently review plans, aiming to increase children's time in mainstream.

Raising attainment and achievement

- All children make appropriate progress against their individual targets. Almost all children are working on elements of the Foundation Milestones. A few children are working on elements of early level literacy and numeracy.
- All children improve their communication skills. They are increasing their ability to give shared attention to a range of objects, people or activities. All children indicate preferences to objects or activities through non-verbal, verbal or physical responses. All children are developing their awareness of themselves and their emotions.
- Children working at the early level undertake short, focused tasks in literacy and numeracy. Most children work independently on tasks set by teachers which capitalise on their interests. For example, a few children require less support in ordering and sorting tasks and are maintaining focus for increased amounts of time.
- Children achieve success in a variety of meaningful ways. They build trust and confidence in school staff and attend school on a full-time basis. They are increasingly expressing their feelings and choices and cope well with new experiences. They are developing tolerance to new sensory stimuli and shape their own routines and preferences in learning. Children make friends, take turns and spend time in groups. They are learning when to ask for help. All these experiences are leading to improved interactions in school, at home and in the community.

- Senior leaders understand well the economic and social circumstances of children in their care. They work well with families to direct them to valuable sources of social and financial support from school partners.

Practice worth sharing more widely

There are exceptionally effective approaches to the leadership of change among school staff. This is supported by a strong learning culture among staff where problems to address, or new approaches to try, are identified by an enthusiastic and ambitious staff. Throughout, they are determined to improve outcomes for children. Staff engage in professional learning or research to support the introduction of changes and also try out small tests of change. The sharing and wider implementation across the school of successful new approaches is supported very effectively by the collegiate attitude of staff. This is encouraged and structured by the very supportive and innovative headteacher and his senior leadership team. This learning culture can also be used very effectively to support whole school priorities such as the expansion of high quality play and enquiry pedagogy.

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.