Summarised inspection findings

Erskine Waterfront Campus School

Independent

18 November 2025

Key contextual information

Erskine Waterfront Campus (EWC) is an independent special school located at a purpose-built education campus in Erskine, Renfrewshire. CrossReach charity is the proprietor of the school. CrossReach is the operating name for The Church of Scotland Social Care Council.

The school provides education for pupils based on a relational and attachment focused approach. Children and young people are aged from eight to 18 years, and all require significant additional support in their education. Local authorities place children and young people at the school following periods of interrupted learning as a result of their additional support needs. The school roll is currently 32. This includes a few young people who are on joint placements with local authority mainstream schools or attending college. There are eight learners working at the senior phase and 24 working at broad general education (BGE) level. Class sizes are small, with a maximum number of six. Each class has a teacher and a support for learning assistant. The headteacher is supported by a principal teacher and two pupil support co-ordinators.

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

- Almost all staff at EWC share highly nurturing and respectful relationships with children and young people. Staff are supportive of learners and are keen to engage with them. They welcome learners warmly and support them throughout the day. Children and young people feel safe, listened to, valued and encouraged to learn. Staff and learners respect each other. Staff understand learners' needs and interests and support them to explore their aspirations and know their rights. As a result, children and young people are confident and play an active role in the life of the school.

- Most children and young people begin their placement following a lengthy period of interrupted learning. Staff at EWC create a calm and focused environment that helps most children and young people re-engage in learning. They are effective in offering clear routines and structure which helps learners feel safe and ready to learn. Children and young people are supported consistently in class groups with key staff, which helps them participate better in learning. Staff should continue to develop personalised approaches to support all children and young people to engage in planned learning activities.

- On arrival at school, learners are offered breakfast and given time to settle into lessons. During this time, teachers make use of visual timetables to set expectations and to prepare learners for the day ahead. This supports the majority of children and young people well to prepare for learning. A minority of teachers have established clear routines throughout lessons. These include appropriate starter activities, exploration of what children and young people will learn

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and how they will know they have been successful in learning. This approach helps learners to understand the purpose and value of their learning. A minority of learners are capable of more difficult work. Staff should create sufficient challenges in learning for all learners. Senior leaders should now work with staff to agree on consistent practices which will be embedded across the school.

- The headteacher works well with staff and partners to ensure that physical activity and outdoor education feature prominently in most learners' programmes. Staff tailor enjoyable activities to the individual needs of children and young people. This includes valuable employability skills training and work-based learning activities for senior phase learners. Examples include placements with football clubs and volunteering opportunities with local arts organisations.

- In a few lessons, digital technologies are used well to enhance children and young people's learning experiences. The school has developed a digital learning strategy which should be applied in all classes to ensure more consistent use of digital technologies to support learners' engagement. A few children and young people would benefit from the use of assistive technologies to reduce barriers to learning. This includes speech to text tools to help learners record their ideas, and text to speech tools to support reading comprehension.

- The majority of teachers use a variety of formative and summative assessments well to determine learners' progress. A minority of teachers could develop further their use of questioning to assess children and young people's level of understanding. A minority of teachers have participated in moderation activities with teachers in similar schools. Senior leaders should ensure that teachers' professional learning maintains a focus on ensuring the accuracy of teachers' judgement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level.

- Most learners in the senior phase know the progress they are making towards gaining qualifications and awards. However, they have a limited understanding of the skills which they are developing or how these could be applied in real life contexts. Teachers should identify more ways to support young people to understand the progress they are making in their learning and the skills they are developing.

- In the BGE, teachers ensure that their yearly plans provide coverage and progression. These cover CfE experiences and outcomes across most curricular areas well. In the senior phase, teacher's plan termly to ensure coverage of Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) outcomes, across four terms. Senior leaders support teachers to consider children and young people's progress in learning, for example during planning feedback meetings. Senior leaders should now ensure that all teachers' planning is of a consistently high quality.

- Teachers and staff develop pupil-friendly Individualised Educational Programmes (IEPs) for all children and young people. They are written in a clear and accessible format. Senior leaders should ensure that IEP planning provides further detail regarding how children and young people will work towards measurable short-term targets.

- The length of the school week was reduced following consultation with stakeholders. There are three short days where learners are in school from 9.30 am until 1.30 pm. On these days, teachers spend considerable time with learners who are on breaks or lunch times. These are not periods of planned progressive learning. As a result, children and young people's ability to access a broad range of learning experiences is restricted, particularly up to the end of S3. Senior leaders should ensure that teachers maximise children and young people's opportunities to participate in planned, progressive and purposeful learning.

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- Senior leaders and teachers are using an electronic tracking system increasingly well. They record and monitor pupil progress during twice-yearly assessment weeks. They are now more able to record children and young people's progress systematically. Senior leaders should now establish robust processes to analyse and evidence children and young people's incremental progress more effectively. This will help staff use data more confidently to understand learners' progress and plan next steps.

- Most children and young people present with frequent low-level disruptive behaviour on a daily basis. Most children and young people present with seriously disruptive behaviours at points across the school year. Staff are skilled at supporting children and young people regulate their emotions when distressed or presenting with seriously disruptive behaviours. They have engaged well with professional learning in nurturing approaches. This includes trauma informed practices, de-escalation training, disengagement training and how to physically restrict movements safely. In recent years there has been an overall decline in the requirement for the use of restrictive practices. All staff should continue to support children and young people to reduce instances of disruptive behaviours. This will help minimise the impact on the learning of their peers.

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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 proprietor.

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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

- Most children and young people in the BGE make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, with a few making good or accelerated progress. However, a minority could be progressing further. Senior leaders need to improve tracking across literacy and numeracy organisers, including recording small steps more effectively to help teachers identify future learning. Senior leaders and staff do not yet record children and young people's progress in relation to the literacy and numeracy organisers. They should now address this to ensure learners make sufficient progress in all aspects of literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Almost all children and young people at the BGE stage are working at CfE first level. A few children and young people are working at CfE early or second level.

- Overall, children and young people make stronger progress in developing their listening and talking skills compared to reading and writing skills. Overall, children and young people require more support and practice to develop their writing skills further.

Listening and talking

- Most children and young people make good progress in listening and talking, which is a strength across the school. They listen respectfully, respond thoughtfully, and ask helpful questions. They engage well with stories, making predictions, recalling key details, and articulating their enjoyment. They are also developing communication strategies successfully to use when anxious or distressed.

Reading

- Most children and young people are making satisfactory progress in reading, with a few making good or better progress. They are developing skills in selecting relevant information and analysing texts. To build independence, they need more opportunities to make notes without prompts or structured worksheets. The school has a broad range of reading genres, which learners can access in classes. The school has a dedicated school library in the canteen space for children and young people to access.

Writing

- The majority of children and young people make satisfactory progress in writing from their previous levels. Overall, most children and young people have the potential to accelerate their writing. They are increasingly applying spelling rules, using self-checking strategies, and

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developing skills to present information, explore issues, and express opinions. Most children and young people now need to write extended texts for a range of purposes and audiences.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Almost all children and young people are working at CfE first level. A few children and young people are working at early or second level.

- Most children and young people focus their learning on developing their number, money and measure skills. Most need to experience more opportunities to improve their progress in shape, position and movement and information handling.

Number, money and measure

- Appropriate to their level, children and young people sequence correctly, identify missing numbers and use appropriate methods for the four operations. They share equally using concrete materials and are developing understanding of length, estimating accurately in centimetres and metres. They need more opportunities to work with fractions, decimals, and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- Children and young people describe basic shape properties using the correct mathematical terms. They identify common shapes in familiar three-dimensional (3D) objects. They should continue building their understanding of angles and shape descriptions. They need to develop further their use and understanding of angles and symmetry.

Information handling

- Children and young people use the language of chance and uncertainty appropriately. They use this language in different contexts, including real life situations. They need to build more fully their use of ways to display and analyse data and information.

Attendance

- Almost all children and young people have increased attendance at school when compared to previous placements. Despite this, their average attendance in 2024/2025 remains below national averages. Most children and young people have attendance over 85% and a minority over 90%. A few children and young people have very low attendance.

- Senior leaders are aware of children and young people with low levels of attendance and understand the reasons well. This includes significant family circumstances and long-term school refusal. Senior leaders and staff are successful in sustaining and increasing levels of attendance for most children and young people. They implement strategies successfully to increase attendance. These include visiting children and young people where they live, seeking funding to them to participate in learning activities and reestablishing positive attitudes to school. For a few children and young people, the complexity of their lives impacts significantly on their capacity to return to education or establish longer term positive patterns of attendance at school.

Attainment over time

- Most children and young people make satisfactory progress over time across the curriculum, with a few making good progress. Teachers track learners' progress, attainment, attendance and achievement, reporting twice yearly to parents and local authority partners. Staff also monitor the level of support which children and young people require, noting where they can reduce support gradually. Parents value the regular, high-quality feedback, which helps them

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support their child's learning. Almost all stakeholders, including parents and professionals, are very satisfied with the progress learners make at EWC. Senior leaders have decided on a shorter school week for all children and young people at EWC, when compared to peers nationally. This impacts on children and young people's access to a full broad general education and senior phase, which limits learners' attainment over time.

- Senior leaders do not yet use school systems routinely to support strategic analysis on the progress of cohorts of children and young people. This results in senior leaders and staff not having a clear overview of where progress and attainment has slowed across stages or subject areas. All young people attain National Qualifications. This includes a range of National 1, 2 and 3 level units and full awards. However, most young people are capable of attaining at higher levels. For example, young people often learn at second level during S2. When they enter S3, they are frequently presented for qualifications at the same or a lower level. Senior leaders and staff should consider carefully which National Qualifications they enter young people for. They should increase their expectations of what young people can achieve and make sure that SQA presentation accurately reflect young people's abilities. They should also allow young people to experience a broader curriculum, particularly up to the end of S3.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- All learners attending EWC face significant barriers to learning and engagement. For them, re-engaging with the curriculum and building the positive relationships needed for a successful placement represents a major achievement. The majority of children and young people would benefit from more opportunities to increase their resilience in unstructured social situations, such as spending breaks and lunchtimes with their peers. Staff should continue to bring children and young people together safely in larger groups. Examples of helpful activities include weekly pupil choice sessions, sports at public venues, and whole-school events like coffee mornings, Halloween parties, fundraising days, and prize-giving assemblies. These experiences help learners feel more comfortable in social situations and gradually strengthen their social resilience.

- Children and young people build employability and teamwork skills through activities such as the Christmas Fair, and at events such as the careers day. Staff support learners to build their social skills and confidence by inviting local schools, community groups and partners to attend EWC events. Learners also increase successfully their capacity for analysis and evaluation through a philosophy in schools programme. A minority of children and young people are already developing leadership skills by actively contributing to school decision-making and event planning. They do this by attending Pupil Council meetings and participating in working groups with the Headteacher. Most recently they helped to develop the school's mobile phone policy.

- Learners are building their communication skills and developing their critical thinking skills. They do this through group discussions about pertinent social issues such as crime, gun control and internet safety. Staff track the skills which children and young people develop as they move through the school. As a next step, they should use the tracking of skills development to identify and address any gaps in skills which children and young people have. Staff recognise and celebrate skill-based learning by providing in-house awards for children and young people's skills development.

Equity

- Senior leaders and staff have a strong understanding of learners' social, educational, and behavioural needs. transport and targeted support to families, including help with funding,

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transport, and access to services. They ensure that there is no cost to the school day by providing all necessary resources including lunch and trip expenses. This helps to reduce barriers and supports learners to sustain their placements. Staff offer informal support throughout the year, building trust and strong relationships with learners and their families. Senior leaders also work with external partners to deliver tailored interventions for families, including those facing financial hardship.

- Since 2021, most young people who moved on from EWC, did so successfully. The majority of school leavers attended college, a few moved back to mainstream school and the remainder went into local authority training. Senior leaders work well with local authority partners to plan for young people leaving EWC. Staff also help identify suitable work placements in the community and provide ongoing support throughout these experiences. Over the past five years, the school has become increasingly successful in encouraging learners to remain in education until the age of 18. This helps ensure they receive a full Senior Phase and improves their chances of achieving a positive destination after leaving school.

- Senior leaders should continuously re-evaluate and assess the length of time which individual learners can sustain education at EWC. They should consider increasing the average hours which children and young people spend in school where possible. This will help meet children and young people's full entitlement to education and improve or accelerate their attainment.

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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.

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