

Summarised inspection findings

Middlefield School

Glasgow City Council

5 December 2023

Key contextual information

Middlefield School is a local authority special secondary school situated in Toryglen, Glasgow City. All young people have a range of additional support needs. The school supports 25 young people from across Glasgow City. There have been a number of changes to staffing within the senior leadership team during the previous school session.

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

- Staff know and understand each young person's pastoral needs and interests well. They support them by modelling caring relationships throughout the school day. This approach helps a majority of young people to overcome anxieties related to attending school. A range of documents detailing each young person's individual abilities and needs provide staff with information regarding each young person's wellbeing. This information helps staff to understand any potential triggers which could cause young people to become anxious or distressed. Staff's positive relationships with young people supports a majority of young people to engage sufficiently well in their learning. A few young people are beginning to develop positive relationships with their peers.
- Young people are not always clear on the purpose of their learning. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have begun work with staff, and young people to create a new vision and values for the school. This work has the potential to support staff, parents and young people to have a clearer understanding of the school's aspirations, and the purpose of learning, for all.
- Teachers plan a range of learning activities in the local community, which provide motivating contexts for learning. These activities overcome the limitations of the school building and support young people to learn in real life contexts. Young people engage well in these learning activities. The use of community settings helps prepare young people well for post school transitions. Teachers, with the support of the local authority and partners, need to continue to develop the range of young people's experiences to ensure they access learning in ways, which motivates and engages them.
- Young people use digital technology often to help them manage stressful situations. Teachers are beginning to use digital technology to support young people's learning, engagement and motivation. Teachers need to continue to develop their use of digital technology further so young people can build on their previous learning as they move through the school.
- Staff use praise consistently and appropriately. This supports the positive learning environment. They adapt the level of challenge appropriately for a majority of young people's learning, when required. This helps young people to regulate and remain calm. Staff celebrate young people's success through digital platforms, emails home and school events. They

should now develop further how they support young people to recognise when they have been successful in their learning.

- Teachers need to develop more creative, imaginative and relevant ways to stimulate and challenge all young people when in a class grouping. In most classes, young people would benefit from a clearer lesson structure and greater opportunities to promote independence in their learning. They would benefit from increased opportunities to develop a range of skills through planned and progressive outdoor learning. Teachers should work together, with the senior management team, to develop further a shared understanding of what high-quality learning and teaching looks like for the young people of Middlefield School.
- Staff have a good understanding of each young person's interests, and things which may cause them to become distressed. This supports staff to identify appropriate individualised targets for each young person. Individualised targets linked mostly to wellbeing and communication are captured in wellbeing and assessment plans (WAPs). Young people's individualised targets form the basis for all daily interactions between staff, and young people. This supports staff to know how best to interact positively with each young person. Teachers should link individualised targets captured in WAPs more effectively to young people's learning.
- Teachers are developing their confidence in using a range of assessment approaches to identify how well young people are progressing in their learning. They have engaged in a number of moderation activities both within the school and with colleagues at local mainstream schools. As a result, teachers are beginning to build their confidence in making professional judgements of young people's attainment. Assessment of young people's abilities does not yet inform planning for next steps effectively enough. Teachers need to develop their skills and understanding of assessment and moderation further. This will support them to ensure young people's learning builds effectively on prior learning.
- Teachers planning for young people's learning in the short term is based mostly on each young person's interests. Longer term planning focusses on each young person's future in their local community. Planning for young people's learning does not take sufficient account of the expectations of Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers should consider how planned learning supports young people more effectively to build on their skills within the four contexts for learning as they move through the school.
- The current school day includes time to support young people to transition positively at the start and end of school each day. Teachers need to ensure this time is planned and supports young people to progress in their learning. This will ensure young people receive their full entitlement to education.
- Teachers are developing their use of a new tool to track and monitor young people's progress. Senior leaders need to continue to support teachers to develop their skills in tracking and monitoring young people's progress. This will support them to plan young people's learning, which builds on what they can already do.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- 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.

3.2 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

- Young people who attend Middlefield School, follow a highly personalised curriculum. The wide variability of young people's communication and other additional support needs renders comparisons of groups or cohorts invalid. All young people require significant support to achieve Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels throughout the broad general education phase. Most young people make satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment. All young people achieve CfE early level in literacy and numeracy before beginning their senior phase of education. A majority of them achieve CfE first level and a minority achieve CfE second or third levels before beginning their senior phase. A majority of young people have successfully raised their attainment in listening and talking.
- Most young people in their senior phase attained literacy and numeracy National Qualification course units or course awards at National 2 between 2021 and 2023. A minority of young people progress to attain National Qualification units or course awards at National 3 in English and Application of Mathematics. A few young people are capable of attaining better than currently planned. All staff need to raise their expectations of what young people can do to ensure they attain as best possible.

Literacy and English

Listening and talking

- A majority of young people communicate well with staff. Small class groupings and opportunities to work on a one-to-one basis with staff supports young people to develop their listening and talking skills. Overall, all young people are making good progress in developing and applying their listening and talking skills throughout the day and in the wider community. A few young people can articulately share extensive knowledge and specialist vocabulary about areas of interest to them. Staff should continue to support young people to become more confident social communicators.

Reading

- A few young people visit the local library and a local book shop. This promotes the enjoyment of reading. A majority of young people can retell the basics of a story. They understand how the title of a book would help them choose a story to read. Young people have access to books related to their special interests in a majority of classes. A few young people are able to engage in complex questions with an adult about what they are reading. They can share their understanding of challenging vocabulary. Staff should provide young people with more opportunities to develop their reading skills for functional purposes across the day.

Writing

- A majority of young people can use digital devices to record their writing. They are motivated to write pieces of creative writing related to their interests. A majority of young people can use punctuation in their writing. Young people, who are reluctant to write are encouraged to share their ideas with staff. A few young people are keen to share their stories with others. Young people would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Young people should continue to be supported to develop their skills to use digital tools to create a piece of text.

Numeracy and mathematics

Number, money and measurement

- Across CfE levels, a majority of young people can apply their knowledge of core numeracy skills in practical contexts appropriately. They can use money with adult support in predictable transactions, for example, counting out tokens to use for a bus fare or using money to purchase items from a shopping list. A few young people can use money in less predictable transactions and without adult support. A minority of young people demonstrate their ability to measure and weigh ingredients when applying their skills when cooking. Young people should continue to be supported to learn and apply their knowledge of core numeracy skills in real-life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Across CfE levels, young people can use their knowledge of shape to sort, identify or describe two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects when supported in practical activities. Staff should continue to support young people to expand their knowledge and language of the properties of shape.

Information handling

- Young people would benefit from increased opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge of information handling and probability.

Attainment over time

- A majority of young people in the broad general education (BGE) phase of their education are progressing satisfactorily with their learning. Individual learning plans and reports show that a majority of young people are progressing well with achieving personal targets over time. However, the school does not yet accurately record or analyse how well young people increase attainment over time across the curriculum. Senior leaders, with the support of the local authority, should continue with their plans to develop how they track and monitor young people's progress over time. They should ensure this is more robust using a range of appropriate data and information.
- Most young people in their senior phase gain National Qualification unit awards across a broad range of curriculum areas, predominately at National 2. Young people identify subject areas of interest and are supported well by staff to attain in these subject areas. For example, young people gain unit awards in English, information and communication technology, application of mathematics, personal achievement, multimedia applications, performance skills and taking part in physical education. As young people progress through their senior phase, they increase unit awards across the range of subject areas while undertaking study in new subject areas. A few young people are not progressing sufficiently well and should gain more awards during their senior phase and at a higher level. There needs to be increased expectations of what qualifications young people can achieve. There is a need for senior leaders to continue with their plans to improve the use of data and information to evidence young people's attainment better and accelerate their progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Young people experience success through participation in personalised activities that staff design based upon their interests. Most young people respond positively to these activities, particularly when located in outdoor and community-based locations. These opportunities support young people to develop their independence. As a result most are increasing their confidence when interacting with people less familiar to them. A majority of young people participate in musical activities, where they are developing their skills in musical performance. A few young people's musical skills are progressing well. They are building their confidence to perform in front of unfamiliar audiences. Young people who engage in gardening activities make progress with their cooperation skills to work with other adults and young people. As a result, they agree how they should develop spaces around the school grounds. Senior leaders should continue with their plans to track, monitor and recognise more fully the skills young people develop through these activities. They should consider ways to recognise more fully all young people's personal achievements, including, where appropriate, using accreditation.

Equity for all learners

- A significant amount of the school's pupil equity funding allocation is used to source external partners to provide activities or therapeutic experiences for young people. Young people are selected by staff to attend the activities based upon their knowledge of the young person's interests. These activities help them develop creative skills, for example in musical performance, and build their capacity to interact positively with other people in a range of contexts. Senior leaders should now monitor and evaluate the impact of these partnerships on reducing the attainment gap more effectively. This will help ensure partnerships are helping to accelerate young people's progress and in improving outcomes for all young people.
- All young people respond well to approaches developed by staff to build positive relationships and reduce barriers to accessing an educational environment. As a result, all young people increase their attendance at Middlefield School when compared to their previous educational placements. Almost all of the young people sustain improved levels of attendance during their time at Middlefield School.
- The work of the school and the development of strong partnerships supports young people prepare for life after school. Most school leavers from session 2022-2023 left school and progressed to a positive destination. These young people now access college, work placements, seek online courses or undertake other relevant activities.

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.