

Summarised inspection findings

Craigrothie Primary School

Fife Council

28 April 2026

Key contextual information

Craigrothie Primary School is a small, rural, non-denominational primary school situated in the village of Craigrothie, Fife. The school has a wide catchment area covering Craigrothie, Chance Inn and the surrounding areas.

The school is led by a headteacher who is supported by a principal teacher. The headteacher and has been in post for two years. The principal teacher is class committed for two and a half days per week. They are also the headteacher and principal teacher at another local school under a shared headship agreement.

At the time of inspection, the school roll was 18 children across two classes. A minority of children require additional support with their learning. In September 2024, the majority of children lived in quintiles 3 and 4 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. A few children lived in quintiles 1, 2 and 5.

1.3 Leadership of change	good
This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are: ■ developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community ■ strategic planning for continuous improvement ■ implementing improvement and change	

- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership to the school community. She has a very clear, strategic vision for school improvement and a well-informed rationale for change. The headteacher is supported ably by a principal teacher. Together, they are ambitious for all children to achieve success. They prioritise respectful and trusted relationships with children and families. As a result, they have created a school where most children make good progress and attain well within a nurturing, calm ethos.
- The headteacher and staff have developed effectively, with parents and children, the school’s vision of ‘Small School, Big Ambition’ which is embedded within the life of the school. Children and staff demonstrate very well the school’s values of positive, kind, respectful and confident in their interactions with each other. Children talk confidently about how the vision and values support them in their learning and relationships. As a result, most children behave very well.
- All staff have a good understanding of the school’s socio-economic context. They know all children, their needs and their backgrounds well. All staff have a strong focus on supporting children’s emotional wellbeing and addressing gaps in learning across the school. The headteacher and staff use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) well to supplement staffing to meet the specific needs of children most affected by poverty. These additional staff support targeted children very well to regulate their behaviour and support improvements in children’s literacy. The headteacher and staff should now track more effectively the impact of all

funded interventions. In doing so, they should demonstrate better the extent to which PEF is closing attainment gaps and accelerate the progress of learning for identified children.

- The headteacher gathers the views of parents regularly to identify effectively areas for improvement. She recognises that the rural location of the school can make it difficult for parents to engage fully in sharing their views and opinions. The headteacher is creative in using online-questionnaires to gather the views of parents. She also engages parents in a range of activities when they visit the school to attend children's showcase events. As planned, the headteacher should develop further approaches to involve all stakeholders in evaluating the work of the school and agreeing future priorities.
- The headteacher discusses with the Parent Council the progress of school improvements and how PEF is used. As a next step, she should ensure all stakeholders have a greater involvement in improving the school and how PEF should be spent.
- The headteacher and staff have created a useful quality assurance calendar which outlines activities to monitor the effectiveness of the work of the school. They gather helpful information from sampling children's work, talking to children and observing classroom practice. The headteacher observes learning and teaching annually and teachers observe each other teaching twice per year. Staff are provided with clear, written feedback which highlights what is working well and areas for further development. In addition, the headteacher holds discussions with teachers regarding children's attainment, progress and achievement three times per year. The headteacher and staff work collaboratively to use How good is our school? 4th edition to evaluate the work of the school. They use the information gathered effectively to identify key areas for improvement. School improvement priorities currently include the development of high-quality learning experiences through the use of digital technology and outdoor learning. Staff also aim to support further children's wellbeing and promote positive relationships and behaviour across the school community. These improvement priorities are valid and appropriate.
- The headteacher supports teachers well to engage meaningfully with annual professional reviews. She responds positively to teachers' professional interests and supports them to undertake development priorities linked to these areas. The headteacher ensures that professional reviews and staff development plans are linked to school improvement priorities. Teachers use these plans to support the development of their capacities in line with General Teaching Council for Scotland standards. For example, a minority of staff are leading colleagues in developing new approaches to supporting children's emotional wellbeing. This is ensuring a consistent approach to supporting children to manage their emotions better. As a next step, the headteacher should support staff to measure further the effectiveness of professional learning and the subsequent impact on their practice and outcomes for children.
- A minority of children benefit from a range of leadership opportunities. They are members of the pupil council and library committee. All children have leadership opportunities within the classroom. They talk passionately about the positive contribution they make to the life of the school and wider community through these opportunities. For example, the pupil council worked with staff and their peers to develop playground and lunchtime charters. These charters ensure all children have clear expectations regarding their actions and behaviour during these times. These leadership opportunities are supporting well children's development of skills for learning, life and work. Moving forward, staff should ensure all children have meaningful leadership opportunities linked to school improvement.

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

- Across the school, staff have nurturing and caring relationships with children. They know children and families very well. This helps them to support children to be ready to learn throughout the day. Staff have used classroom audit tools effectively to ensure the learning environment is calm and inclusive. Children and staff refer to the values positive, kind, respectful and confident in their interactions through learning and in the playground. Staff offer sensitive and discrete support to children who may become dysregulated. This helps to minimise disruption to learning. As a result, most children behave positively in their interactions with one another and with adults.
- The headteacher and staff collaborated to agree the 4-part model for lessons. Teachers use this consistently across the school. In a minority of lessons, children lead aspects of learning. For example, children routinely use the 4-part model to identify what they are learning, how to be successful and how to assess their progress. This is developing well their independence and knowledge of their next steps. Across the school, children are ready to take a greater role in leading their own learning. This should ensure pupil voice is enhanced further leading to fully motivated and engaged learners.
- In most lessons, children learn effectively through a range of activities, such as whole class discussions, group work and independent tasks. Teachers also use the local area and community effectively to enhance the learning experience. Children enjoy using their knowledge in different contexts and this is helping to sustain their engagement in learning. In most lessons, children are engaged in their learning. Most children listen well with their learning when tasks and activities are well matched to children's needs and interests. A few children lose focus and become disengaged when they are expected to listen for prolonged periods of time. To minimise low level disruption and best meet the needs of all learners, the headteacher should support staff to consider better the pace of lessons across the school.
- In almost all lessons, teachers offer clear explanations to children. In almost all lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning with children and how they can be successful. In a majority of lessons teachers are building the steps to success with children. This is helping children to understand their learning and what they need to do to improve. In most lessons, teachers support children to identify and evaluate skills they use across different contexts for learning. As a result, most children can explain the skills they are using and developing in their lessons. All teachers use questioning well to help children link new and previous learning. Most

teachers use questioning to extend and deepen children's thinking. The headteacher should continue to build on this good practice to ensure consistency across the school.

- All teachers use the interactive whiteboards very effectively to introduce lessons and model learning. Children use tablets well to play games to reinforce their learning. Children who require additional support with learning in literacy use technology very well to help them with writing. As identified, the headteacher and teachers should now develop further their approaches to digital technology to ensure children access more creative digital learning approaches.
- Staff working at the early stages are developing well their understanding of play pedagogy. They have engaged with professional learning and used the core provision from early years to plan their environment. Moving forward, staff should continue to develop their understanding of what effective play pedagogy looks like. In doing so, they should continue to review the learning environment to encourage curiosity, creativity and independence. Staff should develop further their approaches to consider the teachers' role in observing, facilitating and extending play. They should ensure all learning experiences are developmentally appropriate, engaging and allow children to develop effectively their learning through play.
- In most lessons, teachers provide useful verbal feedback to children. In most lessons, teachers use a few formative assessment strategies to make accurate judgements about children's understanding. In a few lessons, children effectively peer and self-assess their learning. Staff use written feedback effectively in jotters and children are now beginning to act on this feedback. This helps children to understand further their next steps.
- Staff worked together to agree an annual assessment calendar which outlines expectations for assessment. This is helping teachers to ensure children experience a range of assessments in literacy and numeracy, including commercial diagnostic assessment frameworks and National Standardised Assessments. Teachers are using these increasingly well to evaluate and track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They identify gaps in learning and plan interventions for these. The headteacher and staff should now develop further their use of assessment data. Staff should now consider how best to support children capable of achieving even more. They should use assessment data more effectively and consistently across the school to improve the planning of learning to meet the needs of all children.
- Staff participate in moderation activities, both within the school and across the cluster. They value these opportunities, as they are helping to strengthen professional judgements of a level. Teachers should continue to engage in regular high-quality moderation activities, both within and beyond the school to increase further their confidence in what achievement of a level looks like.
- Staff focused on planning as part of school improvement last session. As a result, teachers' planning is becoming more consistent and focused on improving outcomes for children. Teachers plan learning well, over the short, medium and long term, using local authority progression pathways for all areas. Teachers share effectively an overview of learning with parents termly. When planning learning, most teachers work together with children to understand what they already know and what they would like to learn. This supports children to have choice in a few areas of learning.

- The headteacher and teachers meet three times per year to discuss planning and tracking of children's progress. The headteacher has recently improved systems for tracking and monitoring children's progress. This is helping staff to identify gaps in learning for children and plan appropriate interventions. She should now extend her systems to ensure children capable of more are identified, and appropriate support implemented. Staff should ensure that all children are supported and effectively challenged in their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers have recently introduced local authority progression pathways in all curricular areas to inform their planning. These take appropriate account of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes. Teachers have also devised three year programmes to support planning across multi-composite classes for learning across a few subjects and health and wellbeing. The headteacher and staff should now embed the use of these progression pathways and programmes to ensure children experience appropriate progression and breadth across all curricular areas.
- Staff have recently introduced an outdoor learning framework. This is linked to the skills for learning, life and work. It ensures a progression of knowledge and skills from early to second level. Staff are using this to effectively plan learning in their local area, for example numeracy in the garden to make symmetrical patterns. Staff should embed the framework to ensure that children build on prior knowledge and skills in developmentally appropriate ways.
- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of physical education a week. Teachers use both indoors and outdoors to provide this. This is providing children with opportunities to explore aspects of their physical wellbeing.
- All children follow a programme of religious and moral education at all stages of the school. Most children engage well in developing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a few world religions. The headteacher should also ensure that children receive their entitlement to religious observance over the year.
- Children receive their entitlement to experience a 1+2 languages approach. Teachers use a progressive programme to ensure that children experience progression and depth in learning French from P1 to P7. Staff have introduced Spanish from P5 as a third language.
- Staff and children have recently developed the school library. They have an attractive library area and children are the librarians. Children are encouraged to borrow books from the school library. Additionally, they have a fortnightly visit from the library bus. This helps to promote children's interest in reading across the school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- There have been significant changes in leadership over the last few years. The headteacher has worked very effectively to build trust and positive relationships with families and the wider community. As a result, the majority of parents are now comfortable in approaching the school with questions or suggestions. The majority recognise the school takes their views into account when making changes. Most parents feel that they receive helpful feedback about how their child is learning and developing.
- Parents and community volunteers run a daily breakfast café within the school. This provides breakfast and social opportunities for children and families. This also supports children well in being ready to learn every morning.
- The Parent Council is very supportive of the school. Parent members regularly raise funds to enhance children's learning experiences and provide additional resources. They represent the views of the wider parent forum during meetings with the headteacher and staff. Parents are currently concerned about the roll-out of 1 to 1 provision of digital tablets for older children. The headteacher rightly recognises the importance of working with the Parent Council to ensure that a shared plan for the use of digital devices is developed and agreed across the school community.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The headteacher and staff have a strong focus on supporting and improving children's wellbeing. Children are proud of their school and have a deep sense of belonging to their school community. Most parents believe staff promote children's emotional wellbeing well and provide children with the support they need to be confident and healthy. Staff know children very well. They use this to build relationships that enable most children to feel that staff encourage them to do their best. As a result, most children are well behaved. Across the school, there are supportive, nurturing relationships between staff and children. Most children say the school helps them to become confident and all children say that they enjoy learning.
- Staff model behaviour which promotes and supports the wellbeing of all. Most children have a confident knowledge of the wellbeing indicators. They discuss ably each of the indicators giving examples of what they mean and how they experience them. For example, they explain how to stay safe online responsibly and what it feels like to be nurtured and respected.
- Children are developing well their ability to recognise and talk about their emotions using several commercial resources. These resources enable them to discuss and better reflect on their own wellbeing. Staff check-in with children regularly to support children to consider how they are feeling and understand their emotions. Staff should now streamline their approaches to supporting children to discuss their emotions. This should ensure greater clarity for all children across the school. Children evaluate their wellbeing three times a year. Staff use this information well to plan and provide appropriate support. Skilled support staff work with targeted children very effectively to understand and address worries and anxiety. Most children feel they can talk to a trusted adult about their concerns. They feel that they are treated fairly and with respect by staff and their peers. All children report that they feel safe in school.
- Most children and the majority of parents agree that the school deals well with bullying. A minority of children report that they have never experienced bullying. Staff have recently created a draft respectful relationship and anti-bullying policy in consultation with children and parents. This draft policy reflects well the language of national guidance. In taking this policy forward, the headteacher and staff should work with children and parents further to ensure a clear and shared understanding across the school community about what constitutes bullying and how it should be addressed.
- Most children feel that staff teach them to have a healthy lifestyle. They experience an appropriately broad and progressive curriculum that ensures children learn about all aspects

of health and wellbeing. During health and wellbeing lessons, children consider aspects of healthy lifestyles and making choices. They have regular opportunities to be active. This includes PE lessons and outdoor learning. Children are enthusiastic about these opportunities. As a result, they understand the importance of regular physical activity on their physical and mental health. They are developing well their gross motor skills, building resilience and developing teamwork skills.

- As a result of annual training and guidance, staff understand and apply the statutory requirements and codes of practice in relation to child protection. They have developed robust systems to support child protection procedures and keep children safe. Teachers audit how inclusive their classroom is regularly throughout the year. This helps them to provide a flexible, inclusive learning environment which meets effectively the needs of all children. Staff have a good understanding of the range of children's needs within class. Most parents feel that their child receives the help that they need to do well. A minority of children who require additional support with their learning have child's plans which identify very effectively targets and resources to support learning and wellbeing. These plans are reviewed regularly with parents and children. The headteacher and staff should now ensure that all children who require additional and targeted support with learning have appropriate targets set within their summary of support plan. They should ensure that they can more clearly measure the effectiveness of support and interventions which lead to improved outcomes.
- Staff engage well with a range of partners to meet children's needs. For example, they collaborate with local authority services for autism spectrum disorders and traveller community families. Partners provide helpful professional learning for staff and supportive interventions for children and their families. This is supporting staff effectively to plan learning that meets the needs of children who require additional support.
- Staff plan robust transition programmes which support children well as they move into P1 and secondary school. Teachers visit the partner nursery to meet new children. They invite children to participate in classroom visits prior to their first day in school. These activities support children very effectively to transition successfully to school. Staff link well with the cluster secondary school to support children as they move from P7 to S1. All children engage in a variety of well-planned transition activities. For example, they participate in a two day curricular experience and an outdoor residential experience with their peers from cluster primary schools. This supports them very effectively to develop positive relationships with their new peers. Where appropriate, children benefit from an enhanced transition programme. This helps to build children's confidence when transitioning to secondary school.
- Children develop their knowledge and understanding of equality, diversity and some multi-faith issues during assemblies and in a few areas of the curriculum. They are beginning to develop an understanding of their rights through a focus on the United Nations Charter for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Staff should now support children further to fully understand their needs and rights under the UNCRC. Moving forward, the headteacher and staff should develop a strategic overview of how children learn about their rights, equalities, diversity and protected characteristics across the curriculum. Staff should ensure children's learning in these areas is progressive and coherent. They should ensure children fully understand their place in the world as global citizens. They should support children to develop further their skills and understanding to tackle discrimination and intolerance.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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 school roll comprises of a small number of children across P1 to P7. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in overall statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Most children achieve expected levels in numeracy and talking and listening, with the majority of children achieving expected levels in reading and writing. The majority of children who require additional support in their learning make good progress towards their individual targets.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children communicate confidently and articulately. They interact positively with staff and their peers. Most children talk confidently to a range of adults in school. Children listen attentively to the teacher and follow instructions. As children progress through the school, they make appropriate progress in turn-taking and sharing their ideas and opinions. They offer their views and build on the ideas of others in group and class discussions. Children now need to develop further their listening and talking skills in a range of contexts.

Reading

- Younger children hear and say the different sounds made by letters. They enjoy reading aloud with adults and talking about their books. The majority of younger children identify accurately the key features of books. They read aloud with frequency and expression. They are able to recognise and name punctuation in texts. Younger children would benefit from reading more challenging texts. Most older children enjoy reading for personal enjoyment. They talk about books they are reading and distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. They are developing well their fluency when reading aloud. Children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their understanding of fact and opinion.

Writing

- Younger children write one or more sentences independently. They use capital letters and full stops correctly. They apply their knowledge of sounds to spell tricky words. Older children enjoy writing a range of short texts regularly for different purposes. Older children would benefit from further support to confidently use a range of language techniques. For example, to use simile, metaphor and a greater variety of punctuation to engage their reader.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy.

Number, money and measure

- Most younger children confidently count forwards to 20. They need to build their confidence in accurately counting backwards and recognising numbers before. Most younger children add and subtract within 10 with materials. They would benefit from more work on identifying coins. Most older children confidently use place value to write numbers accurately. They round to nearest 10, 100 and 1000. They are not yet confident in rounding to the nearest decimal place. Most older children identify equivalent fractions. They identify different ways of paying for goods but need further revision on using money to pay for goods and get change.

Shape, position and movement

- Most younger children continue a simple pattern with shape or colour. They correctly identify two-dimensional shapes. They are not yet confident in identifying three-dimensional (3D) objects. Most older children correctly identify and discuss the properties of 3D objects. They identify right angles but are not able to name or describe a range of other angles.

Information handling

- Most younger children interpret a simple pictograph. They would benefit from collecting their own data and presenting information appropriate to their age and stage. Most older children gather data and present this in a range of charts and graphs. They are not confident with the language of probability and likelihood of events.

Attainment over time

- Due to the small numbers of children at each stage, and a fluctuating school roll, attainment data over time can be variable. Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and numeracy over time. The headteacher has introduced an effective tracking system to monitor individual children's attainment over time. Staff use a range of literacy and numeracy assessments to evidence their attainment. The headteacher has supported staff to develop their use of data. Staff have correctly identified from this data that writing across the school is an area for development this session. Their development work is beginning to show improvements in attainment in writing for a few pupils. The headteacher and staff use information well to identify and deliver universal and targeted interventions. Staff should now consider how they are measuring the success of interventions more effectively. Additionally, staff should use data more effectively to identify further challenge for a few children.
- Over time, children's attendance is consistently below the national average. A minority of children have an absence of 10% or more. This is negatively impacting the attainment of these

children. The headteacher follows local authority processes to monitor children's attendance effectively. She is proactive in understanding and addressing the reasons behind children's individual absences. These reasons are mainly due to family circumstances and ill health. Moving forward, the headteacher and staff should now work more closely with parents to ensure parents understand better how attendance impacts of children's attainment and achievement. In doing so, they need to improve the attendance of a minority of children. All children attend school on a full-time basis and there are no exclusions on record.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff work with partners to provide a range of experiences for children. They track children's participation in these experiences and outwith the school. This ensures that no child misses out. For example, staff have ensured that there are lunchtime clubs available during the school day. Staff also track children's awards within school and children are proud of the recognition they receive for these. A minority of children develop their leadership skills as they progress through the school by taking on roles such as pupil council, librarians and house captains and are beginning to explore initiating their own lunchtime clubs. These opportunities are developing children's skills of communication and responsibility. Staff should consider how they can extend these leadership opportunities to all children. As planned staff should support children to identify, build on and track the skills they are developing through these achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and families well. They know the socio-economic circumstances of the children. They have considered the cost of the school day and offer support with items such as uniform and free clubs. Children entitled for free school meals receive further financial support with costs of trips and the P7 residential. Senior leaders work closely with families to offer discreet support where required.
- The headteacher uses PEF well to enhance staffing. These staff support children to manage their emotions and wellbeing. This has led to children being more settled and spending more time learning within the class. The headteacher and staff should now strengthen approaches to gathering data to evidence the impact of PEF on targeted children. They should demonstrate more clearly the impact of interventions and understand better the progress towards closing poverty related gaps and accelerating progress.

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.