

Summarised inspection findings

Carleith Primary School

West Dunbartonshire Council

26 May 2026

Key contextual information

Carleith Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the western area of the town of Clydebank. At the time of inspection, there were 62 children on the school roll, arranged across four classes. Most children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1-4.

The school is led by the headteacher and depute headteacher. The headteacher has been in post for four years. He is also the headteacher of another local school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	excellent
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	

- All staff work very well together to ensure learning, teaching and assessment are of an exceptionally high standard. Almost all children are highly motivated learners who feel valued, included and inspired to achieve their best. Across the school, all children benefit from a consistently calm, purposeful and nurturing learning environment. This is shaped by the school's shared values, children's rights and the well-embedded 'Carleith Learning Powers'. These 'powers' support children to develop skills and attributes in teamwork, independence, perseverance, curiosity, citizenship, kindness, communication, reflection, ideas and bravery. They support a culture of respect, responsibility and aspiration that is evident in every classroom. As a result, almost all children behave exceptionally well. Across all stages, children experience learning that is highly engaging, meaningful and well matched to their needs. All teachers plan experiences skilfully that promote independence, leadership, personalisation and choice, enabling children to take ownership of their learning. Consequently, almost all children demonstrate confidence when working individually and collaboratively, selecting resources independently and speaking proudly of their learning and achievements.
- Staff make very effective use of the school's 'learning powers' to promote a deep understanding of the skills required to learn well. Children talk with exceptional clarity about how skills such as perseverance, reflection and teamwork help them tackle challenges across the curriculum. For example, almost all children demonstrate skill in perseverance as they engage with problem-based learning. As a matter of routine, children reflect upon their progress in achieving their learning powers. Almost all children explain very clearly what they do well and what they need to do to be even better. As a result, children demonstrate strong leadership of their own learning. Senior leaders and children introduced the Carleith Centurion Awards to further strengthen, recognise and celebrate children's motivation and achievement. Staff use these awards very well to reinforce a culture of ambition and continuous improvement.

- All teachers deliver learning that is consistently of a very high quality. They work collegiately with international colleagues, to provide very impactful, research driven problem-based experiences to children. All staff use the well-considered learning and teaching policy very effectively to support high-quality experiences for children. They plan learning that is purposeful and very well structured. They provide consistently clear explanations and very helpful modelling to support children to understand new concepts. As a result, almost all children discuss and shape their steps to success in lessons and explain clearly the purpose of their learning. They speak confidently about the level of challenge within their tasks and how this supports their progress.
- All teachers use questioning very skilfully to deepen children's thinking and extend higher-order skills. Across the school, teachers use creative learning styles, such as problem-based learning, learning through play and outdoor learning to ensure rich learning experiences. Senior leaders and teachers worked very well together to create the very well-considered Carleith play policy. This provides clear expectations for staff to support high-quality, skills-based play and enquiry. Staff use observations and reflective dialogue to adapt learning spaces responsively and act on children's interests and ideas. Teachers plan high-quality play experiences for all children throughout the school. This ensures children remain engaged and motivated by their learning.
- Teachers and children integrate digital technology seamlessly into learning and teaching to enhance children's experiences. Children use applications and online platforms very effectively to extend, consolidate and personalise their learning. Teachers harness digital technology very well to support children who require additional help to achieve. Children utilise digital tools confidently to record, reflect on and share their learning, through innovative approaches such as 'playback feedback'. Older children take on leadership roles as "Carleith Digital Geniuses", providing guidance and inspiration to other children and members of the wider school community. They help to drive whole-school digital innovation. For example, children who act as 'Digital Geniuses' run drop in lunch clubs to help extend other children's digital skills.
- Senior leaders and teachers ensure rigorous, very well embedded assessment processes are used exceptionally well to drive improvement. Teachers make highly effective use of both school developed and local authority progression pathways. They use a wide range of high-quality assessment tools and national standardised materials very effectively to gather rich evidence of children's progress in breadth, challenge and application. Teachers' feedback, both oral and written, is of consistently high quality and explicitly linked to learning intentions, steps to success and the 'learning powers'. This helps children understand fully their progress and identify their next steps.
- Senior leaders ensure robust, evidence-informed approaches for tracking and monitoring provide a clear, real-time overview of progress for individuals, groups and cohorts. All teachers use assessment information very well to identify gaps, plan interventions and ensure timely, targeted support. Children requiring additional help benefit from very well-coordinated, regularly reviewed interventions supported by strong multi-agency partnerships. Consequently, these children make good progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers review regularly the impact of planned learning on outcomes for children, ensuring consistently high-quality practice. Staff should now explore ways to increase

further children's voice in shaping how they present evidence of their learning and achievements. This could further strengthen children's understanding of their own progress.

- Teachers engage regularly in rigorous and highly effective moderation of all aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. This supports very high levels of professional consistency across all staff. As a result, teachers' judgements of children's achievement of a level are consistently robust and accurate. Senior leaders and teachers value extensive opportunities to moderate the quality of their work and the standards of children's learning. Staff work with colleagues across the school, local learning community and with international partners to validate their professional judgements. This enhances teachers' accuracy and confidence in assessing children's progress against national Benchmarks.
- Senior leaders sustain an outstanding culture of professional enquiry and collaboration. Staff engage deeply in collaborative action research focused on improving pedagogy, including problem-based learning and specific 'learning powers'. The findings of this work are rigorously evaluated and widely shared, driving sustained improvement across the school. This is leading to strong outcomes and making a real difference for children.

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, young people. 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

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

- Due to the very small numbers of children at each stage, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or Curriculum for Excellence levels.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. Across all stages, most children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children achieve beyond national expectations. Most children who require additional support for learning are making good progress, with a few children making very good progress.

Attainment in literacy and English

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

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen and engage very well during class activities and discussions. They take turns and listen respectfully to others in groups. Children confidently contribute to discussions and use their 'learning powers' vocabulary to provide appropriate and helpful feedback to others. Older children contribute very effectively to discussions and build on the ideas of others. They appear confident in discussion and enjoy sharing and presenting their learning with children, staff and the wider school community. At all stages, children demonstrate well their presenting skills in different contexts. For example, children work very effectively in groups to create video clips using their understanding of effective communication skills to engage their audience. Across all stages, children talk positively about how 'learning powers' help them to be more confident sharing their ideas and opinions.

Reading

- Younger children read aloud confidently using their knowledge of simple punctuation. They ask and answer simple questions well relating to stories and are learning to explain their preferences for particular authors and their writing styles. They identify confidently the key features of books, such as front cover, authors, illustrators and the blurb. They use their knowledge of sounds and letters well to read simple words and sentences. They use picture clues confidently to predict what will happen next in a story. Older children decode unfamiliar and complex words well. They recognise the punctuation and techniques that help them to read with accuracy, fluency and expression. They use reading strategies, to summarise text and find key information to answer comprehension questions correctly. They are developing their understanding and use of literal, inferential and evaluative questions. At all stages children

should now be supported to further strengthen their skills in reading aloud across a range of genres, including non-fiction, to a wider range of audiences.

Writing

- Younger children understand and use capital letters, full stops and finger spaces accurately in their writing. They write sentences with increasing independence. They write simple words accurately and match them to pictures. They sequence words, sentences and drawings correctly to create three-part stories with a clear beginning, middle and end. They are learning to identify verbs and adjectives and use them accurately in sentences. Older children write across a variety of genres successfully, such as recounting personal events, and creating reports, letters and imaginative stories. They understand and use a wide variety of punctuation accurately in their writing, including dialogue. They use phonological knowledge and spelling strategies to accurately spell increasingly complex words. Children at all stages use pictorial and written rubrics well to support, check and 'uplevel' their writing, for example when developing character descriptions, developing settings and summarising texts.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in numeracy and maths. Children would benefit from greater opportunity to use digital technology to enhance their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children are developing well their confidence in counting numbers within 100 and they recognise odd and even numbers with ease. They explain values for numbers with two digits and are developing skills well in adding and subtracting numbers to 100. Younger children identify successfully fractions in pictorial form and use number facts confidently to find simple fractions of an amount. Across the school, children display accuracy in almost all aspects of number, money and measure. Older children read numbers confidently to six digits. They count and order five-digit numbers accurately. They add and subtract confidently numbers to 10,000. Older children are developing well their understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages and use these with increasing confidence to solve simple problems. They are developing their understanding well of the relationship between these mathematical concepts. Across the school, children should continue to focus upon developing even quicker recall of number facts.

Shape, position and movement

- Across the school, children are developing very well their skills and knowledge in shape, position and movement. Younger children identify and name a range of basic two-dimensional shapes and are confident describing and drawing patterns with one line of symmetry. Older children identify and name successfully three-dimensional objects and discuss the properties of these, using correct mathematical language. They identify correctly different types of angles and use their knowledge to calculate the size of complementary angles. Older children would benefit from further experience of using an eight-point compass to give accurate location data.

Information handling

- Across the school, children use information handling skills very well in real life contexts. Younger children use tally marks to record information and use this information to make basic pictograms. Older children create more complex bar graphs and have a developing

understanding of pie charts. They read information from pie charts confidently. They should now use their understanding of pie charts to present their own data.

Attainment over time

- Currently, the overall attendance figure for the school is 92.2%. This is in line with the national average. A minority of children have attendance levels below 90%. This is due mostly to reported illness and holidays. Senior leaders encourage positive attendance through very regular communication with parents. Posters displayed in school encourage parents to support regular school attendance for all children. This helps sustain positive school attendance.
- Senior leaders monitor rigorously school attendance. This allows them to identify quickly emerging challenges which may prevent regular school attendance for individual children and families. They create very bespoke packages of support for children and families who find attending school regularly challenging. They work very effectively with partner agencies to ensure children attend school as regularly as possible. This results in improving levels of attendance for children who require highly individualised support.
- Senior leaders and teachers, supported very well by skilled support staff, have successfully raised children's attainment through a relentless focus on delivering very high-quality learning and teaching. As a result, most children demonstrate consistently high attainment over time in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. As a next step, teachers should now consider how to increase attainment for those children capable of achieving even more. Teachers use very well a wide range of assessment data to identify and address any attainment gaps. They provide highly effective support through a range of targeted and universal interventions. They set clear, measurable targets for children. This ensures that children's progress is tracked very effectively.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All staff demonstrate a deep commitment to recognising, supporting and extending children's wider achievement. Children develop their resilience and teamwork skills through a very extensive range of school clubs such as football, guitar, dance and biking. Children speak enthusiastically of participating in local and authority wide festivals such as dance and football festivals. Children discuss clearly the personal, social and sporting skills they are developing through their participation in clubs and activities. Children lead these clubs regularly, developing very effectively, their leadership skills. Senior leaders and teachers track rigorously children's attendance at clubs, providing sensitive support to children at risk of missing out on developing skills and attributes offered by these activities.
- Children regularly celebrate their achievements outwith school. They proudly share their success with their peers during school assemblies, attractive wall displays in school and via online platforms. This helps them to recognise the skills they are developing through wide achievement activities.
- Children use 'Centurion Awards' exceptionally well to develop their ability to recognise and track their own personal, social and academic progress. These awards, designed and created by the school community, link children's behaviours, actions and progress directly to their 'learning powers'. Children use these awards to set their own targets for achievement, create their own support plan, seek feedback from others, and collect evidence of their progress.

Children are rightly very proud of their achievements. They explain eloquently how working towards achieving their awards advances their 'learning powers'.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a very sound knowledge of the social and economic contexts of their children and families, including financial pressures. They take very sensitive and effective action to mitigate against barriers children face. They proactively engage with the expertise and support from a very wide range of partners and specialist services. This helps to ensure children and families get the help they need, when they need it. Senior leaders take every opportunity to reduce the cost of the school day for families. For example, they encourage parents to reuse 'preloved' uniform. Additionally, they make every attempt to subsidise and reduce the cost of school excursions and events, so that all children can take part.
- Children across the school plan and run the school's social enterprise project 'The Pantry' every month. During this event, parents and families have the opportunity to purchase clothing and store cupboard essentials at a significantly reduced cost. Children demonstrate their strong commitment to reducing waste and improve sustainability. They are supported by staff to foster very strong and purposeful community relationships, including highly impactful inter-generational projects. Children display exemplary commitment to these events and worthwhile experiences.
- Senior leaders' rationale for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) spending is based on a robust analysis of a range of data, including poverty-related attainment and other information about outcomes for children. This allows senior leaders to work closely with staff to identify and target the needs of specific groups of children. Senior leaders use PEF effectively to fund additional staff to work closely with groups of children to improve attendance, engagement, confidence and wellbeing. This approach helps targeted children attend, attain and achieve better. Senior leaders should continue to track the effectiveness of all funded interventions in order to evidence the accelerated impact on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Senior leaders, staff, children and parents work very effectively together to design and review a coherent curriculum that directly shapes high-quality learning experiences. The curriculum has a clear rationale and is structured around five agreed drivers for improvement: a dynamic curriculum, health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy, digital learning and an empowered learning community. These drivers provide a consistent framework for planning learning across the school. Children experience this curriculum through well-designed learning that develops key competencies, known to them as 'learning powers'. Children can clearly explain how they use these learning powers in different contexts and how they support progress and achievement. The 'Centurion Awards' strengthen children's experiences by explicitly linking learning, skills and achievement to the curriculum drivers. Wider achievement is an integral part of children's curriculum experience. Children are well supported to participate in a broad range of opportunities, which are valued and recognised as part of their learning journey. Children understand how these experiences develop their skills, confidence and readiness for future learning.

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.