

# Summarised inspection findings

**Craighalbert Centre**

**16 June 2026**

## Key contextual information

The Craighalbert Centre is a grant-aided additional support needs school and early learning and childcare (ELC) service located in Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire. The school is currently supporting 15 children and young people ranging from P1 to S6. The children and young people who attend the school have complex communication, visual impairment, learning, health and care needs. There are three composite classes. Senior leaders and staff group children and young people into their assigned classes to provide the most effective support for their individual needs. Children and young people are placed at the Craighalbert Centre through an individualised placement agreement involving the child or young person's local authority.

The Craighalbert Centre comprises three classrooms, a therapy room, a sensory room, an activity room, a conference room, a hydrotherapy pool and a learning garden. There is also a family room and a family lounge.

At the time of the inspection, no children were attending the ELC provision. The ELC is not part of this inspection report.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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

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

- The school is led very well by the highly-respected Head of Learning. Staff build a welcoming and positive ethos using the school values of child-centred, collaborative, ambitious, kind and inspirational. The Head of Learning and staff have embedded a culture which reflects a strong commitment to children's rights. All staff, children and young people's relationships are respectful. This is evident in the warm interactions and caring attitudes across the school community. Staff have established a trusting atmosphere that encourages all children and young people to be expressive and confident. Staff are highly skilled in aiding children and young people to be active participants who make considered choices.
- The Head of Learning encourages very well staff to be creative in their strategies and approaches to engage all children and young people. Staff skilfully enhance learning, movement and communication across the curriculum by using a variety of contexts. For example, children and young people learn through sessions involving rebound therapy, hydrotherapy, music therapy and outdoor learning in the school's garden area and woods. All staff are highly effective in prioritising learning, whilst meeting the care and health needs of all children and young people. As a result, they maximise teaching and learning time.
- Across the school, staff ensure that children and young people's learning experiences are fun, appropriately challenging, and well matched to their interests and individual targets. All children and young people exercise choice. They are very well supported by staff to do so through the use of a range of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) approaches. These AAC approaches include a paper-based symbol communication system, eye gaze technology and digital communication software. All children and young people communicate very effectively across a range of contexts, including during pupil council meetings and swimming lessons. Staff should continue to support parents and families to develop further their knowledge and skills to support children and young people's communication at home.
- Staff support very effectively all children and young people to develop their independent movement for functional purposes. They provide children and young people with opportunities to use equipment whenever possible. Staff plan very well for transitions within the school day. They make sure that time spent moving between and within learning areas is purposeful and maximises learning. For example, staff promote communication and movement skills when children and young people make their way to the rebound room. Staff use a range of creative, individualised teaching approaches to help ensure they meet the access methods of all children and young people. These teaching approaches include experiential activities, communication swimming and multi-sensory learning.

- All staff know very well children and young people's individual learning needs. Children and young people's ability to access learning can change during the day because of their health and care needs. Staff are highly skilled at assessing children and young people's immediate needs and they make adaptations to learning activities to make them accessible. Staff are highly attuned to each learner and they provide effective and immediate support when children and young people become distressed. All staff are consistent in their approaches and follow clear plans. They adopt effective strategies to support children and young people to communicate their needs and wishes. As a result, children and young people are supported very well to re-engage with learning as soon as possible.
- Staff have created a curriculum that is underpinned by the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As a result, children and young people have plentiful opportunities to access play and social time throughout their day. Staff use very well smart and responsive technologies to enable children and young people to engage actively with their environment through cause-and-effect experiences. For example, a few young people use a switch to activate a foot spa. Across the school, staff promote positively child-led play that supports physical development, engagement and wellbeing.
- The Head of Learning and staff have established highly effective assessment approaches. Staff's assessment approach is underpinned by frequent professional dialogue involving multi-disciplinary teams. These teams consist of teachers, learning care and therapy practitioners (LCTPs) and allied health professionals. Collectively, they provide accurate assessment of each child or young person's needs in their child or young person's plan. Staff work together very well to document care, health, communication and learning needs and consider fully factors that impact on learning. They use this information to plan highly personalised experiences that provide a holistic programme to address barriers and maximise learning opportunities.
- Staff assess very well the progress that children and young people are making. They use a digital resource which captures data and creates an evidence portfolio. Teachers and LCTPs complete ongoing assessments. These assessments capture progress using the foundation milestones, pre-early Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) literacy levels and the continuum of engagement. Teachers and LCTPs undertake formal observations for each individual child or young person five times each term. The Head of Learning audits and evaluates these observations and provides written feedback to staff. This helps ensure that observation records are consistently of a high quality across the school. Staff review the evidence portfolio regularly and use this very well to inform future collaborative planning.
- The Head of Learning and staff have developed effective approaches to moderation. Within the school, staff work very well together across classes to moderate learning twice per session. Staff have established a partnership with another school to strengthen further their approaches. As a result, almost all teachers and LCTPs are confident in their professional judgement on the progress that children and young people are making. Staff should continue with current plans to increase the frequency of moderation activities.
- The Head of Learning and staff are embedding a planning framework that helps ensure that they are proactive in meeting the changing needs of children and young people. Staff plan very well over different timescales by building on the assessment information contained in children and young people's plans. Teachers and LCTPs use termly plans to organise learning and provide clear contexts for learning. They ensure these contexts provide breadth in planned

learning activities and include ethos, curricular areas, achievement and interdisciplinary learning (IDL). Teachers, LCTPs and health professionals use very well assessment information and termly plans to devise personalised plans for each child or young person. They make sure these personalised plans are highly detailed and reviewed regularly due to the changing care and health profiles of learners. Staff adapt these plans daily at morning meetings when they take into account up-to-date information provided by parents. This collaborative approach to planning considers a range of health, care and learning needs. As a result, children and young people benefit from highly responsive and progressive learning programmes.

- In the BGE, most children and young people's progress is assessed by staff using the foundation milestones. A few children and young people are beginning to attain within pre-early level milestones for literacy and English. All young people in the senior phase are assessed by staff using foundation milestones and National Qualification criteria. Staff regularly review tracking data and use this to record progress effectively, capturing the incremental progress that children and young people are making. The Head of Learning uses the information gathered very well to review progress, identify patterns and trends and provide support and challenge to staff. These well-considered procedures make sure that almost all children and young people are making progress and building very well on their prior learning. As planned, staff should now work together to improve the quality and consistency of the targets set within pupil plans.
- Staff provide parents with regular high-quality information on children and young people's progress. Teachers and LCTPs send home daily updates using daily diaries. Staff consider parents' views during annual review and planning meetings. The Head of Learning and staff very recently established a parents' evening to provide learning information in addition to annual review and planning meetings. Staff should continue to build on this development to promote further the work of the school and deepen engagement with parents and families.

## 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 and young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. An area for development has been agreed with the school and the Board of Trustees.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Most children and young people are making very good progress in literacy and numeracy. Most children and young people in the BGE are working at foundation milestones level with a few beginning to attain at pre-early level in literacy and English. All children and young people require significant additional support with their learning.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children and young people are making very good progress in literacy and English.

#### Listening and talking

- Most children are making very good progress in their communication skills. At foundation milestones level, children and young people communicate very well their basic needs. Most children and young people imitate during interactions using vocalisations or body movements, for example during starter songs used in class. At pre-early level, children and young people are beginning to, with support, participate in conversation using their communication aids. Staff should continue to embed fully communication approaches in line with current plans.

#### Reading

- At foundation milestones level, most children and young people are making very good progress in developing their attention and engagement skills. They give shared attention to a range of sensory stimuli, objects and people. They make choices using real objects, symbols and by using AAC aids. Children and young people enjoy stories related to thematic units, for example the rainforest and changing and growing. Children and young people at pre-early level use their reading skills to scan and track symbols. They use these skills very well to express an opinion to familiar and unfamiliar adults with the support of a communication partner.

#### Writing

- Most children and young people are making very good progress in enhancing their emerging writing skills. Children and young people benefit from the collaboration between allied health professionals and education staff. Therapy teams engage very effectively with education staff to identify opportunities to maximise progress when reviewing children and young people's posture and movement. This ensures that children and young people enhance their fine motor skills. For example, they extend movement to use a second AAC device to support communication or use adapted keyboards in music lessons. Children and young people are building on their motor skills and improving their overall communication. Children and young

people at pre-early level are working very well to create short pieces of functional writing. Staff should continue to build on the positive approaches they have developed to maximise opportunities for emergent writing. This should include continuing to deepen their approaches to using innovative assistive technology.

### **Senior phase**

- In the senior phase, young people are making very good progress in gaining appropriate National Qualifications in literacy and English based on their level of need. Young people have gained qualifications related to literacy and English at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 1. These qualifications include recognising text, having your say and communication passport.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- All children and young people are developing their foundational numeracy skills through practical tasks, play and real-life learning opportunities. Most children and young people are making very good progress within numeracy and mathematics.

### **Number, money and measure**

- Most children and young people at the foundation level of milestones use very well songs, AAC technology and physical resources to help them identify coins and count and match coin value. All children and young people develop further their awareness of quantity through sensory exploration and experiential learning activities. Staff incorporate numerals 1-10 into activities within IDL themes and physical activities, such as curling and motor activity training program (MATP) lessons.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Children and young people develop very well their understanding of spatial awareness, position and movement, and early problem-solving skills through participating in digital and motor skills activities. Children and young people enjoy meaningful and fun activities that involve exploration of shape. Staff support learners with directional cues to navigate space. Children and young people regularly use two-dimensional (2D) shapes across different areas of the curriculum, for example, in art and IDL thematic learning. A minority of children and young people have explored symmetry. Staff should continue to support further learning by reinforcing consistently positional language during daily routines and play.

### **Information handling**

- Most children and young people engage very well in information handling by using a range of AAC strategies. They use communication devices to effectively make choices, express preferences and respond to questions. Most children and young people select and sort information using a structured grid system, supported by their communication partner.

### **Senior Phase**

- At the senior phase, young people develop their numeracy skills very well through structured and flexible learning experiences. They develop their functional numeracy skills during activities that are highly relevant to everyday life, for example when shopping. Young people's numeracy skills are captured as part of their personalised learning pathways, for example, when they are working towards personal development qualifications.

## Attainment over time

- All children and young people who attend the school have complex communication, care, health and learning needs. Overall, children and young people maintain very high levels of attendance when their wider care and health needs are taken into account. Senior leaders communicate effectively with parents to consider the impact of changing health needs on attendance. They maintain frequent contact with parents and allied health professionals to support children and young people to return to school at the earliest opportunity. Staff across health and education plan very well these supported transitions. As a result of staff's approaches, children and young people's attendance rates are very high.
- Most children and young people in the BGE are making very good progress over time across the curriculum. Staff measure very effectively the progress that children and young people make. Children and young people make strong progress against their personal targets, the foundation milestones, pre-early CfE level in literacy and English and the continuum of engagement. Children and young people build very well their movement, communication and emerging literacy and numeracy skills. They apply these skills across different contexts, including in art and music lessons and through outdoor learning.
- All young people are making very good progress as they move from the BGE into and through the senior phase. All young people are attaining an increasingly wide range of National Qualifications at SCQF level 1. These include qualifications in recognising texts, taking part in an individual activity and learning in a different environment. All young people have gained personal achievement awards at an appropriate level. All young people gained a National Qualification at SCQF level 1 for participating in a residential activity, engaging successfully in activities such as kayaking and abseiling. As planned, staff should continue to broaden the range of progressive awards available to young people in the senior phase.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children and young people's successes and achievements are recognised, for example during 'WOW' moments, that capture ongoing snapshots of learners' successes. Children and young people's achievements are celebrated across the school and with families through internal star awards, daily online diaries, termly newsletters and monthly assemblies. Staff and parents can easily see how and when children and young people are developing their confidence, making active choices, and contributing to the life of the school.
- Children and young people in the pupil council play an active role in shaping school events, for example, family and community fun days and school shows. Within one class, children and young people recently developed a successful partnership with a local primary school class. They have visited the pupils in the primary class on a few occasions. As a result, children and young people are developing meaningful connections with peers within the local community.
- At the BGE, children and young people gain formal recognition of their personal achievements through relevant award programmes well matched to their learning, wellbeing and development needs. For example, across the school, almost all children and young people achieve formal accreditation for their swimming pool achievements, recognising skills such as movement, moving toys in the pool and water confidence.

- All young people in the senior phase successfully achieve a range of relevant awards and accreditation for their achievements. Secondary stage learners participate in an annual residential trip to an accessible activity centre, which family members can also attend. During these excursions, young people extend their movement and communication skills by taking part in a range of physical activities including archery, orienteering, canoeing and zip wire. All young people gain national personal achievement qualifications at bronze, silver or gold level.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff have a very good understanding of the additional support needs and socio-economic context of all children and young people. The Board of Trustees and Head of Learning have invested significant time and funding to strengthen staff capacity and build a very strong professional skill base. This has led to all staff having a consistent understanding of how learners access learning. As a result, attainment is being raised for almost all learners.
- Parents and families have established a Parent Partnership that provides meaningful activities and opportunities for families to come together to offer mutual support. The Head of Learning has provided welcoming spaces for parents to meet. These spaces include a parent room and parent lounge. Recently, the Parent Partnership successfully accessed community funding to run art classes. This funding should benefit parents of children and young people with additional support needs who attend the Craighalbert Centre and other local schools. As a next step, senior leaders should continue with current plans to strengthen further the voice of parents. This could help make sure that parents contribute more fully to the work of the school. For example, senior leaders should work more closely with parents in areas such as school improvement planning and the allocation of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).
- Staff work collaboratively with families and partners to support young people to move into appropriate post-school destinations suitable to their needs, for example independent living. Staff support effectively young people and their families to prepare for transitions by accompanying them on pre-placement visits.
- The school use PEF to contribute towards the employment of a music therapist for two days per week. All children and young people benefit from regular access to music therapy either during individual sessions or as part of a group. Children and young people are developing their movement and communication skills through participating in these sessions.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

### Assessment approaches

The Head of Learning and staff have established highly effective assessment approaches. Staff's approach to assessment is underpinned by frequent and purposeful professional dialogue involving multi-disciplinary teams. These multi-disciplinary teams consist of teachers, Learning Care and Therapy Practitioners (LCTPs) and allied health professionals.

Collectively, they provide a very robust assessment of each child or young person's needs in their child or young person's plan. Staff work together very well to document care, health, communication and learning needs. As a result of these very well-considered assessment approaches, staff take full regard of individual needs and factors that impact on learning. They use this information to plan highly personalised experiences that provide a holistic programme to address barriers and maximise learning opportunities.

# 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 the Office of His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education in Scotland