

Summarised inspection findings

Collin Primary School

Dumfries and Galloway Council

5 May 2026

Key contextual information

Collin Primary School is a non-denominational school set in the rural village of Collin in Dumfries and Galloway. At the time of inspection, the school had a roll of 32 children organised across two multi-composite classes. The headteacher has been in post since April 2024 and is headteacher for one additional school, as part of the local rural school's partnership. She is supported by a fully class committed acting principal teacher.

Currently, most children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 3 and above. Approximately a third of children are registered for free school meals and 50% of children have an additional support need.

Collin nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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	

- The effective headteacher, supported well by the staff team has created a warm, positive and welcoming ethos built on shared values and children's rights. Children experience positive and respectful relationships across the school. Staff know children and families well, which supports a strong community-feel within the school. All staff display the school's values and refer to them throughout the day. Almost all children behave well and actively demonstrate the school values and respect diversity. Their positive behaviour supports a calm and purposeful learning climate. Staff provide well-judged support for the small number of children who can display dysregulated behaviour through consistent expectations, nurturing approaches and targeted interventions. These approaches are effective in helping children regulate their behaviour and engage positively in learning.
- Staff create calm, well-structured learning environments that promote children's engagement and wellbeing. Staff arrange classroom spaces to foster a nurturing climate where children feel safe and able to thrive. They use high-quality displays to celebrate children's achievements and showcase work they are proud of. This approach ensures that all children feel valued and are supported well to recognise high quality work.

- In most lessons, teachers use a range of approaches effectively to support children's engagement in learning. Children work well in pairs and groups and respond positively to learning contexts that interest them. At times, the pace of learning is too slow, leading to a few children becoming disengaged or passive. Some children also require greater challenge to extend their learning. Staff should continue to refine their approaches to meet the varied needs of multistage classes, for example by varying lesson pace and planning tasks that extend children's thinking across the curriculum.
- All teachers ask children what they already know and what they want to learn next when planning learning across the curriculum. For example, in their current Egyptian learning context where the children have created an Egyptian museum based on their own personal research on ancient Egypt. This helps children take ownership of their learning and keeps learning relevant.
- In most lessons, teachers give clear explanations and instructions that help children understand what they are learning and why. In most lessons, teachers reflect on prior learning with children to help them make links in their learning. Teachers help children recognise what successful learning looks like. Teachers should now support older children to co-create what they think the steps to success are, supporting them to have greater ownership of their own learning.
- In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding and reinforce key ideas. This consistent approach helps children clarify their thinking and demonstrate their learning. Teachers are beginning to embed higher-order thinking skills into lessons, such as analysing, predicting and problem-solving. This is improving the quality of children's learning experiences.
- Teachers make effective use of digital technology to enhance and extend learning. Children have regular shared access to devices, and teachers help them develop the skills needed to use applications that support learning and remove barriers. Children use a wide range of applications support their learning. Going forward, teachers should review the frequency of children's use of digital games, ensuring they appropriately consolidate and extend learning.
- Staff at the early level are improving their play-based approaches through high-quality professional learning. They have begun to create motivating spaces and activities that nurture children's curiosity and engagement. Staff now need to continue using national practice guidance and learn from effective practice in other schools to strengthen their collective understanding of high-quality play. This will help them increase meaningful opportunities that further develop children's creativity and problem-solving skills.
- Children benefit from regular, well-planned and purposeful outdoor learning experiences that build on their prior learning and link meaningfully to the wider curriculum. Teachers plan learning experiences across the school grounds, nearby wild spaces and the local forest. As a result, children develop stronger problem-solving skills, increased resilience and greater confidence in applying their learning in real-life contexts.

- Across the school, staff are increasing children's use of meta-skills. As this work develops, children should build stronger skills in self-management, collaboration and independent thinking. This should help them apply their skills more confidently in new situations.
- All teachers use praise well to build motivation and confidence, and weekly learning overviews help children reflect on their progress and share learning with families. However, children are not yet confident in understanding their individual targets. Teachers should provide more specific, targeted feedback, helping children understand their next steps more clearly.
- Teachers use a broad range of assessment tools across the year to measure children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This includes the use of standardised assessments in literacy and numeracy, which compliment teachers' ongoing formative assessments. They use this information well to identify what children can already do and plan next steps in children's learning. Staff make effective use of the local authority's assessment guidance when evaluating children's progress in literacy and numeracy, helping ensure that judgements are increasingly accurate.
- The headteacher holds termly tracking meetings with teachers to review the impact of planned learning on children's progress. These meetings help staff understand each child's learning needs more clearly. Teachers use this information to plan timely interventions for children not yet achieving expected levels. This includes children who require additional support, children at risk of falling behind, and children from travelling communities who return to the school after periods of travel. Senior leaders and teachers review interventions regularly to ensure they remain effective. As a result, most children receiving extra support make good progress from previous levels.
- Moderation with partner schools strengthens teachers' understanding of national Benchmarks. They work effectively with cluster colleagues to moderate writing, improving consistency in professional judgements. The headteacher's online moderation platform provides a useful space for wider collaboration. Teachers engage actively with colleagues in other local authorities, which enhances the rigour of moderation. Their engagement also increases confidence in using national Benchmarks across other curricular areas. Teachers routinely upload evidence of learning to the platform. They use it to review work and participate in rich professional discussion about planning, learning and assessment. This collaborative approach helps staff compare children's work confidently against national Benchmarks. It also supports a shared, robust understanding of achievement at each Curriculum for Excellence level. Staff use evidence-informed discussions to improve the accuracy of their professional judgements. This approach strengthens learning and teaching across the school, aligning expectations and identifies next steps for improvement.
- The staff team plan collaboratively to ensure consistency and progression across stages. They develop a whole-school overview that sets out key learning contexts and priorities across all curricular areas. Teachers use medium-term overviews effectively to map progression in literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and modern languages. They now need to extend this progressive approach to the remaining curricular areas. In doing so, they should ensure that

coherent pathways are in place which secure well-paced progression and continue to meet the needs of all children.

- The headteacher has created a clear and well-used quality assurance calendar to support learning and teaching across the school. The headteacher routinely carries out classroom observations, reviews jotters and holds learning conversations with children to gain a strong understanding of their learning experiences. Staff receive timely, focused feedback that directly supports improvements in their practice. Monitoring identified the need for greater consistency in lessons, particularly in revisiting prior learning and sharing the steps to success. In response, the headteacher led targeted professional learning sessions where staff worked together to create a shared framework describing what a high-quality lesson looks like. This work has strengthened consistency across classes, improved progression in building on prior learning, and enhanced learners' understanding of what successful learning looks like.
- Children who require additional help with their learning are well supported to make progress. Teachers and support staff deliver good-quality interventions that improve outcomes. A few children follow individual learning plans. These plans are regularly reviewed to ensure that children make the best possible progress from prior levels of learning.

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

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 information is provided in overall statements, due to the small numbers of children at each stage.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- In June 2025, a majority of children achieved national expectations in literacy and numeracy. A few children are working beyond expected levels. Most children requiring additional support are making good progress towards their individual targets in learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English across the school. A few children are capable of achieving more.

Listening and talking

- Younger children listen very well to staff and each other in teacher-led activities and group tasks. Almost all children follow instructions well. They confidently take turns to talk and listen to each other during learning activities. They express ideas and show their understanding by answering questions. Most older children contribute ideas confidently. They listen carefully, recount experiences and build on the ideas of peers well. Across the school, children are confident speaking to peers and adults.

Reading

- Younger children identify accurately initial sounds. They retell familiar stories using small world toys and pictures. Most children read well with fluency and expression, appropriate to their age and stage. They use a range of appropriate strategies to help them read new and unfamiliar words. They are not yet confident in describing the different features of non-fiction texts when choosing texts for particular purposes. Most older children offer a personal preference for authors and the type of books they enjoy. As children move through the school, they explain clearly how the author, cover or title influence their choice of books when reading for enjoyment. They are less confident answering complex questions about the texts they are reading.

Writing

- Younger children form most lowercase letters legibly. They leave spaces between words when writing and write words from left to right. They attempt to use capital letters and full stops in at least one sentence. Older children make effective use of connecting words to extend sentences. They use a wide range of appropriate vocabulary to open sentences. Older children punctuate most sentences accurately suitable to their age and stage. They recount experiences well, write imaginative stories creatively and apply different writing styles appropriately in their topic work. Across the school, all children need to write regularly in a range of genre throughout the year. A few children need to improve their presentation and handwriting.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics across the school. A few children are capable of achieving more.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children count on and back from a given number and recognise odd and even numbers. They solve problems involving addition and subtraction and use the language of measure appropriately. They now need to develop further their ability to share amounts equally. Older children calculate addition and subtraction accurately to 1000 and beyond. They use money confidently and apply a range of strategies to solve real-life mathematical problems. They now need to improve their times tables knowledge.

Shape, position and movement

- Younger children name and discuss features of two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects successfully, appropriate to their stage of learning. They understand and accurately use the language of position, including in front, behind, forwards and backwards. Older children use mathematical language with increasing confidence to classify a range of angles identified within shapes and the environment. They describe 2D shapes and 3D objects using appropriate mathematical vocabulary and have a good understanding of simple angles. Children now need to develop skills in using digital technology to make representations of 3D objects, understanding that not all parts of the 3D object will be seen.

Information handling

- Younger children use tally marks accurately to gather data. They are beginning to display information correctly in simple charts. Older children gather, analyse and present information well, including through the use of digital technology. They use pie charts, bar graphs and line-graphs appropriately to share their findings to different audiences. Across the school, children apply information-handling skills effectively, as seen in their work on a national nature project. This has strengthened their practical understanding and application of these mathematical skills.

Attainment over time

- The small number of children in each cohort and the transient role means that overall trends in attainment are not clear and appear variable. The headteacher has implemented effective processes and systems to record and track children's attainment. Staff use this

data effectively to identify individuals and groups requiring targeted interventions, including those with barriers to learning. They are providing more timely interventions, as a result. This is leading to improvements in children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy over time.

- The headteacher monitors attendance closely and takes proactive action to reduce absence. Average attendance sits at 90.8%, with most absences linked to family holidays and extended cultural leave. The headteacher tracks specific groups and builds strong relationships with families to help support regular improved attendance. Staff's use of targeted approaches, including soft starts and alternative pathways, help a few children re-engage successfully. Staff's effective collaboration with the local authority attendance team also strengthens support. This improves children's attendance through regular information sharing, joint planning and timely interventions for individual children and families. As a result, attendance is improving and children catch up well in their learning. When part-time timetables are required, the headteacher reviews arrangements regularly to ensure they meet children's needs appropriately and remain short-term. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff celebrate children's achievements regularly during assemblies, through an online platform and on displays around the school such as the 'Proud Wall'. Children are developing well their skills in areas such as citizenship, sustainability, sports and technology. Children demonstrate greater confidence and motivation to share their experiences and are inspired by the achievements of others. Children are proud of their individual and collective achievements such as accreditation on their work on children's rights.
- Children at all stages take responsibility and contribute well to the school and wider community through roles such as house captains and the pupil council. They participate in national campaigns and fundraising activities, which helps them recognise their ability to make a positive difference locally and beyond. Almost all children participate in a wide range of clubs and activities within and beyond the school day, including football, gymnastics and creative arts and crafts. The headteacher tracks children's participation and achievements effectively, linking these to the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. She uses this information well to target additional opportunities for children at risk of missing out. As planned, staff should now discuss and track the skills children gain from achievements and link these to skills for learning, life and work. This will help children understand how their wider achievements support their progress over time.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a clear understanding of the context of the school and the range of barriers to learning children may face. Staff work together well to ensure children receive the support they need to have a positive learning experience. Staff work closely with the Parent Council to reduce the cost to the school day by, for example, subsidising the cost of trips. Together they also provide a good as new uniform rail and other seasonal clothing for children. This helps to ensure that no child misses out due to financial hardship.

- The headteacher has a strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) which she shares with the Parent Council. She should now consider how to involve parents and children in decisions about how PEF is used. The headteacher effectively uses funding to purchase resources and additional staffing that support children through targeted and universal interventions. These support improvements in children's wellbeing, inclusion, attendance and progress in literacy. Staff can demonstrate that interventions are having a positive impact and closing gaps in learning for identified children.

Other relevant evidence

- Children experience two hours of high-quality progressive physical education each week.
- All staff implement a consistent and progressive approach across the school in learning French and Spanish from P1 to P7.
- Through their religious and moral education programme and topic work, children learn about Christianity and other world religions. This helps them value diversity, explore different perspectives and develop respect for other cultures.
- Children benefit from the school's promotion of reading. They have access to a well-stocked library and are encouraged to read for enjoyment. This has been supported very effectively by visits from a range of authors, including authors from travelling communities. This is helping children develop a deeper understanding of different cultures and appreciate the diversity within their community.

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.