

Summarised inspection findings

Carrick Knowe Primary School

The City of Edinburgh Council

10 February 2026

Key contextual information

Carrick Knowe Primary School is a non-denominational school in Corstorphine, situated in the west of Edinburgh. There are 287 children across 13 classes. The senior leadership team consists of a headteacher, deputy headteacher and two part-time principal teachers. The headteacher has been in post since December 2018 and the deputy headteacher since 2016. In relation to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, 14% of children live in deciles 2 to 5 and 46% in deciles 6 and 7. The remaining 39% of children live in deciles 8 to 10. Across the school, 10% of children are in receipt of free school meals and 27% have English as an additional language. The number of children who require additional support with their learning is 51%.

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

- Senior leaders and staff have created a calm, purposeful and nurturing ethos underpinned very effectively by children's rights. Children are proud of the accreditation they have achieved for their work on children's rights. All staff ensure the school vision of 'achieving excellence together' and values of respect, responsibility, honesty and kindness lie at the heart of their work. Children articulate well the school values and talk proudly of the postcards and lanyards they receive when they demonstrate these. Staff work very well with children to create a variety of charters such as class charters, a positive relationships charter and a playground charter. These provide children with clarity of the ways children's rights are upheld across the school and support effectively, a very positive ethos for learning. As a result, almost all children benefit from learning in an environment that allows them to thrive and make progress in learning.
- Children feel well supported to be the best they can be. They benefit from the consistent approach used by staff as set out in the agreed positive relationships policy. This policy provides clarity to all staff, children and families of the school's approach and is embedded firmly into daily practice. All staff role model effectively, positive and nurturing relationships. Consequently, children experience caring and supportive relationships with all staff and with other children. Almost all children behave well and are engaged, resilient and motivated participants in their learning. A few children display dysregulated behaviour at times. Senior leaders and staff support these children very effectively through well thought out approaches. For example, additional support is offered at breaks for children who find these times

challenging and staff use scripts effectively to manage conversations when children are upset. Staff's use of these strategies has significantly reduced incidents of dysregulated behaviour.

- Children experience high-quality learning and teaching in almost all learning experiences. Senior leaders have created a robust and comprehensive learning and teaching strategy based on local and national guidance. Staff use this guidance very effectively to ensure children experience high-quality learning and teaching consistently across the school. Senior leaders visit classrooms regularly and teachers benefit from clear feedback about their practice based on key aspects of the strategy. This is improving teachers' practice further, such as improvements to the pace of lessons. All staff use time highly effectively to maximise children's learning time.
- In all learning experiences, teachers provide clear and helpful instructions and explanations. All teachers use opportunities regularly to build successfully on children's prior learning using real-life contexts. This supports children effectively to make strong links across their learning. In all lessons, teachers share effectively the purpose of the lesson and explain clearly how children can be successful. In a minority of lessons, teachers support children very well to co-create steps to success. As a result, almost all children understand the purpose of their learning and what is expected of them. All teachers use questioning very effectively to clarify and extend children's understanding and encourage curiosity and creativity. They engage children well in their learning and develop successfully, children's higher order thinking skills.
- All teachers deliver learning creatively across the curriculum through a wide range of stimulating learning contexts. This is a key strength of the school. Teachers' approaches provide rich opportunities for children to develop their learning through play, outdoor learning and the development of digital skills. In addition, children benefit from outings and welcoming visitors into school to support their learning and engage them extremely well. As a result, children experience learning that is relevant, stimulating and enjoyable.
- All staff in younger classes work highly effectively together to deliver learning through play. This approach, based on local and national guidance, is embedded well across younger classes. Staff have created stimulating spaces and ensure an effective balance of child-led and adult-initiated experiences. Staff provide skilled interactions with children during direct teaching activities and as they play independently. Staff use observations very well to support them in planning next steps for children. This ensures every child experiences learning that meets their needs and interests well. Children develop key skills as they learn, such as communication and collaboration and can talk about how they are developing these skills as they play.
- All children benefit from highly effective opportunities to learn across the curriculum as part of the school's approach to delivering progressive outdoor learning. All children experience high quality learning in the school grounds, the woods and the school allotment. Children enjoy learning about plants, animals, life cycles and insects. Staff deliver a variety of areas of the curriculum through outdoor learning activities such as, cooking, art, literacy, numeracy and technology. As a result of these experiences, children make strong links across their learning in different curricular areas.

- All staff use a wide range of digital technology highly effectively to enhance children's skills and to engage and empower children in their learning. All children in P6 and P7 have access to one-to-one devices and staff provide a range of technology across all other stages. Staff have benefitted from professional learning and use a digital technologies pathway effectively to support progression in skills across all stages. Across the school, children learn skills in coding, use technology to create presentations and to share their learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards skilfully to deliver learning. In addition, staff use digital technology very well for children who require additional support with their learning. This ensures that planned learning is accessible to all children. Staff are proud of their achievement in being recognised for their digital skills. They have shared their success across other schools to support colleagues on their journeys to developing digital skills. As a result, children develop their digital skills across the curriculum well.
- Staff make very good use of the school's assessment framework and calendar. All teachers use a range of national, summative and diagnostic assessments to measure children's progress accurately. Almost all teachers use oral and written feedback and self and peer assessment well to support children to reflect on their learning and progress. As a result, children articulate confidently their targets and next steps in learning. Almost all teachers use national Benchmarks regularly to support their accurate judgements of children's progress. Almost all teachers are beginning to assess children's progress in other curricular areas through project-based learning. As a next step, senior leaders should develop a systematic approach to assessing and recording children's progress across all curricular areas.
- Teachers plan across a range of timescales very well using a range of local authority and school pathways to build effectively on children's prior learning. Teachers use assessment information effectively to inform their planning. They ensure that planned learning is well considered and matched appropriately to meet the needs of all children. All teachers ensure cognisance is given to how they will assess children's learning at planning stages. This provides them with increased clarity across planning, learning and assessment of learning. Teachers moderate planning and assessment within school and with partners in other schools. This is supporting them well to ensure clarity of standards across other schools.
- Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers throughout the year to track robustly children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing. They use a range of assessment information effectively to support their dialogue. In addition, senior leaders and staff identify gaps and plan effective interventions to address these gaps and maximise children's progress. Teachers work closely with support teachers to review children's progress regularly through careful analysis of baseline and follow up assessment information. This is helping teachers to ensure that planned interventions are leading to improved progress for children who require additional support with their 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.
- Following the inspection the education authority, working with the school, have taken forward areas for improvement in safeguarding which required urgent action. HM Inspectors have reviewed information relating to these areas for improvement. HM Inspectors are satisfied with the response taken by the education authority and do not require any further information.

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

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good. In reading and numeracy, most children across all levels achieve nationally expected standards. In listening and talking, most children at early and second level and almost all at first level, achieve expected levels. In writing, most children at early level and a significant majority at first and second level achieve expected levels.
- Across all stages, a few children are achieving beyond expected levels. Most children who require additional support with their learning make very good progress towards their individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and English. Children's attainment in writing is improving as a result of a new approach being used by teachers. This is not yet reflective in the overall attainment figures, but improvements are evident.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen well. At early level, almost all children enjoy listening to stories and retell simple stories. At early level, almost all children develop their turn-taking skills well during conversations. At first level, almost all children are skilled in turn-taking and respond appropriately to verbal and non-verbal cues. At second level, most children speak clearly and express their thoughts well. At all levels, children benefit from regular opportunities to share their learning with an audience in class presentations and whole school assemblies.

Reading

- At early level, almost all children identify accurately letters and simple words. They attempt to read unfamiliar words in books correctly. They use picture clues and illustrations accurately to read stories and make predictions. At first level, most children read unfamiliar text fluently and with expression. They confidently articulate their favourite books and authors. Most children at second level read a short passage fluently using appropriate expression. They discuss confidently different genres of texts and favourite authors. At first and second levels, children should continue to develop their understanding of inferential and evaluative questions.

Writing

- Across all stages, children's handwriting and presentation of written work is of a very high standard. At early level, most children write sentences using capital letters and full stops. They write simple stories with colourful illustrations. At first level, a majority of children use punctuation appropriately to enhance their writing. They use interesting vocabulary and different language features, including adverbs and adjectives to improve their writing. At second level, a majority of children know and apply the techniques of persuasive writing very well. At first and second levels, children should continue to be provided with regular opportunities to engage with extended writing. This should support the ongoing improvements seen in writing in recent months.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, most children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Almost all children at early level count to 30 and beyond, identifying numbers before and after clearly. They use a range of mathematical vocabulary when adding and subtracting and recall addition and subtraction facts within 10. Children would benefit from further practice in identifying coins and using money in real life and imaginary contexts. At first level, most children demonstrate a sound understanding of place value. They describe confidently the range of strategies they use to solve equations. They recall a range of multiplication facts although are less confident in using these to solve division questions. Almost all children working at second level apply their knowledge of place value well when working with whole numbers and decimals. They convert common measurements and identify the most suitable measurement for real life situations. Most children at second level would benefit from further practice in applying their knowledge of the four number operations to solve word problems in a real-life context.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level, identify and describe simple two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. They use appropriate vocabulary to describe position and movement. Children would benefit from further opportunities to revisit understanding of symmetry. Most children at first level describe the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects such as sides, faces and edges. They follow directions using their knowledge of compass points, half turns, quarter turns demonstrating a firm understanding of clockwise and anti-clockwise. Most children at second level identify the number of faces, edges and vertices a 3D object has. They successfully classify a range of angles. They are not yet confident in identifying supplementary and complimentary angles.

Information handling

- Almost all children at early level interpret simple charts effectively. They describe confidently their use of tally marks to gather information. At first level, most children correctly identify pie charts, bar charts and Venn diagrams. Most children at second level describe a range of ways to display information such as graphs and charts. They should now apply this knowledge more regularly through creating digital charts and graphs.

Attainment over time

- Most children maintain very good progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school. Senior leaders use accurate data to track children's progress in attainment over time. Senior leaders, teachers and support for learning staff meet termly to track children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. They track closely individual children and specific groups, such as care experienced children. Senior leaders and staff use assessment information very well to plan highly effective interventions which raise children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders have rightly identified there is a need to improve attainment in writing at first and second level. Subsequently, they introduced a new approach to teaching writing to address this however, teachers are at the early stages of implementing this approach. Children respond well to this new approach, and it is having a positive impact on children's engagement and enjoyment in writing. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to monitor the impact of this on improving attainment in writing.
- The headteacher uses local authority guidelines very effectively to monitor the attendance of all children. Attendance in session 2024/25 was 93.5% which is in line with the national average. The headteacher reports that the main reason for absence is as a result of term-time holidays. The headteacher shares information regularly with all parents about the impact of lower attendance and lateness. She acts promptly where individual attendance dips below 85%. Senior leaders work very effectively with school support workers to engage with families to improve attendance. For example, support workers communicate regularly with parents and provide support through home visits. These interventions are having a very positive impact on the attendance of these children. A few children attend school on a part-time basis. Senior leaders should continue to plan with local authority and partners regularly to ensure these children receive their entitlement to full-time education.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated in classes, at assembly and on wall displays. Staff award children with certificates at assemblies and in classes for a wide range of learning and personal achievements. Children gain confidence as a result of the regular opportunities they have to share their learning and achievements through digital platforms and events. Additionally, children shared their learning on rights at a recent family learning event. This is developing well children's confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. Children confidently discuss key skills and identify how their learning aligns to these.
- Senior leaders and staff capture an overview of children's opportunities for participation in wider achievements through parental questionnaires and pupil consultation. Staff use this information well to identify children at risk of missing out. They share with parents the range of clubs and wider experiences on offer to increase opportunities for greater participation and support all children to achieve. Senior leaders and staff should now formalise and strengthen their approaches to track wider achievements, and children's skills.
- Children develop important skills such as problem solving, resilience and collaboration effectively through well-planned high quality outdoor learning experiences. This is embedded across the school. Children from P3 to P7 also benefit from a wide range of leadership opportunities, such as house and sports captains, pupil voice and children's rights

groups. Children in the equalities group support effectively a growing awareness of children's rights, equalities and diversity through presentations known as 'EqualiTV'. Through this and other leadership roles, children gain important skills for life and learning and work. They collaborate together very well as effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders plan effectively for the use of Pupil Equity Funding. This is used very effectively to fund additional staffing to deliver a range of supports and targeted interventions for identified children. Senior leaders and key staff adopt a bespoke approach to engaging with individual families. They review and monitor the impact of this work carefully. They use well-considered measures as part of this tracking which demonstrate the positive difference to children's wellbeing, attainment and attendance. Almost all targeted children make positive progress towards identified outcomes.
- All staff have a strong awareness of the social, economic and cultural context of their school community and they provide support sensitively to families. The cost of the school day group has reviewed costs for families across the school year. This is allowing them to identify financial pressures for families and to ensure they plan to support equity for all. For example, staff provide clothing such as uniforms, jackets and costume swaps to reduce financial burdens on families. Staff ensure no child misses out of the P7 residential experience due to costs and transport for excursions is subsidised through the Parent Council.

Other relevant evidence

- Children across the school learn French in a well-planned and progressive way. In addition, children in P5-7 learn Spanish. This ensures that all children receive their entitlement to the 1+2 languages programme.
- Children across the school experience a broad and balanced religious and moral education curriculum. Children engage in religious observance through links with St David's Carrick Knowe Parish Church. The child-led equalities group promotes awareness of world religions through regular inclusion within the school's "Equali-TV" platform.
- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education each week.
- Children enjoy a range of fiction and non-fiction books in class appropriate to their age and stage. They have regular access to the school library and have opportunities to borrow books from a book bus that visits the school regularly. This is promoting reading for enjoyment successfully. A few children enjoy reading sessions alongside Archie, the therapy dog. This supports their engagement in reading and builds their confidence to read aloud.

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.