

Summarised inspection findings

Northview House School (Curo Salus)

Kilbarchan

25 June 2019

Key contextual information

Northview House School (Curo Salus) is an independent special school which caters for children and young people with a range of additional support needs including trauma, attachment disorder, autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school roll at the time of inspection is 35, with 18 children at primary stages and 17 young people at secondary stages. Attendance rates are well above the national average.

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 has a strongly supportive and nurturing ethos where being kind to one another is featured highly in interactions between all staff and learners and between children, young people and their peers. Relationships are extremely positive across the school. This enables all children and young people to feel safe and cared for, which helps them to engage in learning. All staff are highly ambitious for children and young people to achieve positive outcomes. In taking this forward, staff need to review the school week in order to maximise learning opportunities for children and young people.
- All staff have a strong awareness of the needs of children and young people attending the school. Almost all staff are adept at ensuring that children and young people receive appropriate support to maintain their focus on learning. As a result, almost all children and young people are happy, active participants and engage very well in their learning for almost all of the time.
- Staff are skilled at supporting children and young people to behave well. As a result, most lessons are calm and learners are very well behaved. In a few lessons, when distracted, children and young people are withdrawn from lessons to enable them to self-regulate their behaviour. As a result of highly skilful support from teaching assistants and child care workers, learners quickly re-engage with learning when they return to lessons.
- The school environment is very well appointed and resourced to meet the wide range of needs of learners. Children and young people take very good care of these facilities and are proud of their school. Staff use a wide range of contexts and learning environments to enhance their teaching such as the local stables, nearby country park and sailing facilities. An extensive outdoor education programme supports children and young people to learn about the benefits of exercise and team building. This programme helps develop their resilience and leadership skills. Young people also learn new experiences such as mountain biking, gorge walking and camping when participating in the school's annual residential experiences. As a result, learners are confident when faced with new and unexpected challenges.
- Led by the head of education and psychology, and the senior leadership team, teamwork amongst staff is a major strength of the school. Almost all teachers, teaching assistants and

child care workers work seamlessly together to provide high quality learning experiences. In most lessons, teachers give clear explanations and use questioning well to challenge children's and young people's learning and encourage them to think. Children and young people understand the purpose of learning in almost all lessons and teachers take account of the different needs of learners in planning their lessons. Learners are active participants in very well planned activities that are appropriately matched to their needs. Almost all children and young people work well both independently and in small groups. Teachers use effective verbal and written praise and feedback to identify next steps in learning. As a result, children and young people are confident learners and know what they need to do next to in their learning.

- Teachers ensure that children and young people have some opportunities to enhance their learning through the use of digital technology. For example, in information communication technology (ICT), young people research topics using the internet and then use this information to develop posters. Children's and young people's understanding and enjoyment of mathematics is enhanced through the use of interactive games and practical activities. Staff should continue with their plans to increase further the use of digital learning across all areas of the curriculum.
- Children's and young people's work is very well presented and attractively displayed throughout the school. They have regular opportunities to play a lead role in learning through making choices about topics, and sharing their personal views and values in whole school groups, such as the eco-committee and sports leaders. Highly effective partnerships with psychologists are providing learners with opportunities to explore their emotions in a safe environment. Children and young people talk very positively about how this has helped them develop coping and anger management strategies and to mature as individuals.
- Northview House School has a highly effective induction programme which is used when children and young people join the school. An extensive initial assessment builds an accurate picture of learner's wider educational achievements and wellbeing needs. The induction programme supports children and young people to settle into their new environment and is providing high quality baseline assessments to support teacher's planning. All learners speak highly of the support they receive during this time.
- All children and young people have very detailed personal learning stories which are frequently updated. These personal profiles contain long and short term targets in every curriculum area. Children and young people contribute to the assessment of their progress towards their targets using a traffic light/smiley face system. Teachers use observations, assessments and diagnostic tests well to regularly measure learner's progress in both the broad general education and the senior phase. Assessment of children's and young people's progress takes account of personal interests, strengths and gaps in their learning. Progress in the senior phase is similarly monitored to a high standard to ensure that young people can gain certification for their achievements in a timely manner. As a result, young people are working at appropriate levels, and courses and programmes are suited to their needs.
- Effective arrangements are in place for teachers to moderate children's and young people's work. Teachers use national benchmarks to support this process. Weekly team meetings, led by the depute heads and focusing on learners' progress, supports the validity of all teachers professional judgements. Informal opportunities for teachers to liaise and moderate learners work with mainstream colleagues' supports further the robustness of their professional judgements.
- Tracking and monitoring is used consistently across the school to support the development of individualised targets for children and young people, and to ensure that next steps are clearly defined. Tracking and monitoring procedures clearly demonstrate the progress that children

and young people make and ensure that staff can plan for appropriate and effective interventions when required. As planned, the school needs to start tracking listening and talking alongside reading and writing.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

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

- The school has been very successful in improving outcomes for children and young people placed at Northview House School for education and care. Almost all children and young people improve their attainment, attendance, engagement with learning, personal achievements, behaviour, confidence and, in particular, their wellbeing. Almost all children and young people transition successfully back into mainstream schools or, in the case of school leavers, into employment, training or further education.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The comprehensive baseline assessment undertaken for each child upon placement at the school provides very helpful information for teachers in planning literacy and numeracy tasks. Most children have experienced interrupted learning previously and staff focus on closing any gaps in literacy and numeracy. Most children and young people are making good progress in literacy and English with a few making very good progress. All children and young people are making at least good progress in numeracy and mathematics with a minority making very good progress.

Literacy

- Almost all children are achieving literacy targets set within personal learning plans. Observations of learning show that most children and young people are making good progress in their writing and can write across a range of purposes and genres, including factual information and personal experience. Most children and young people are making good progress in reading and can read a range of texts for information and enjoyment. All children and young people are given regular opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills and most are making very good progress. Staff need to extend their monitoring and tracking to include progress in talking and listening. Almost all young people are enthusiastic contributors to whole class and group discussion, asking for explanations, seeking clarification and responding well to questions. Children and young people apply literacy skills through poetry writing, the annual writing competition with the Scottish Book Trust, the First Minister's Reading Challenge, film making and the Sports Leaders UK Framework. Children are developing their ability to recognise and label emotions through structured activities and in real life contexts.

Numeracy

- The school has clear progression pathways across early to third level with each individual learner's progress tracked effectively through their mathematics portfolios. A focus on assessments, including ongoing assessments and baseline assessments at the start and end of each session, helps to identify gaps in learning. Gaps in numeracy development are addressed very well through specific, focused interventions and personalised targets.

- Across the school, children and young people demonstrate confidence in number use and explain strategies in calculations. Children at the early stages are able to transfer their knowledge of number to money and work out change from £1. Children are also increasing their confidence in addition and subtraction. Children working in second level and third level demonstrate confidence in a range of number concepts including the use of multiples, factors, decimals and percentages.

Literacy and numeracy across learning

- Across the school, staff look to incorporate literacy and numeracy into lessons to help children and young people apply their skills. This is not yet planned in a meaningful way. Staff should identify, plan and deliver opportunities for breadth, challenge and application in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. This will help children and young people to problem solve and apply their skills in new and unfamiliar contexts.

Attainment over time

- According to the school's own data, most young people achieve a very good range and number of National Qualifications from National 2 to Advanced Higher. Most young people achieve a high number of course awards across an array of subject areas including, English, mathematics, environmental science, art and design, social studies, ICT, physical education and design technology. Commendably, a small number of young people are achieving National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications.
- The school has been very successful in supporting children and young people to re-engage with education often after prolonged periods of interrupted learning. Almost all children and young people improve their attendance significantly and there are currently no children and young people with poor levels of attendance. The school has great success in promoting positive behaviour with zero exclusions and consistently very low numbers of safe holds, well below most schools within the social and emotional needs sector.

Achievements

- Most children and young people achieve very well. Children's and young people's achievements are measured against targets identified in their individualised education programmes and through accreditation. Young people achieve appropriate accreditation for a wide range of achievements. These awards include the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, John Muir Trust, Sports Leaders UK Framework, Registered Go Mountain Bike Centre, Discovery Award, National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme, First Aid Training and Navigation Awards Scheme. A number of young people undertake responsibilities such as head boy and girl and older children support the delivery of the Sports Leaders programme to the younger children. Also, children and young people experience personal achievement through the extensive range of trips and events organised by staff. They develop their skills very well in leadership, working with others, communication, resilience and problem solving.
- The school should now look to develop further children's and young people's record of achievement to enable them to build more progressively on the skills and capacities they are developing through their personal achievement experiences.

Equity

- The school has a comprehensive understanding of the needs of children and young people. They are fully aware of any barriers to learning faced by children and their families. The school provides high quality equitable support to children and young people to ensure they are able to fully access their education.
- The school is very successful in supporting children and young people to move into positive destinations. Commendably, a small number of children and young people have successfully

returned to full-time mainstream education. Almost all school leavers move on into positive destinations in employment, training or further education. Many young people remain in regular contact with the school and pass on their successes in sustaining their post-school placements or moving on into higher education.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - wellbeing

- All staff across education and care have a shared appreciation of the importance of wellbeing in successfully supporting children and young people placed at the school. There is a very strong commitment to fostering caring and nurturing relationships with every child. This is very evident in the warm, welcoming, and patient interactions between staff, children and young people. This leads to an outstanding ethos and culture across the school where children and young people feel safe, cared for, included and highly valued by staff. The calm, caring ethos and culture helps ensure that almost all children and young people are very successful in re-engaging positively in their education, which is reflected in improved attendance, participation and engagement with learning.
- Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators and children's rights are at the core of the work of the school. They are clearly understood by all staff and inform day-to-day practice at the school. Children and young people are confident in discussing their wellbeing and are articulate in sharing how their wellbeing has improved after beginning a placement at Northview House School.
- The school's comprehensive health and wellbeing curriculum is supporting children and young people to keep healthy and safe. They engage in a wide range of sporting and physical activities, eat healthily, build positive friendships and relationships, and understand the risks associated with substance misuse. Commendably, the school has a zero tolerance policy on smoking across education and care.
- Therapeutic support is offered across the school by the psychology and therapy team for all pupils. Care and education staff are trained within small focus groups in a range of psychological approaches which include Playfulness Acceptance Curiosity Empathy (PACE), life story work, and cognitive behaviour therapy. Play therapy is a particular strength of the school and is leading to improved outcomes and increased engagement for children and young people.
- Transition into the school is carefully planned to ensure that all children and young people are well supported and fully prepared to successfully integrate into the school at a pace which takes very good account of their individual level of need and readiness. An initial assessment period, coordinated by the psychology team, allows staff to spend time getting to know each child. When children and young people are ready to engage, a range of initial baseline education assessments are carried out to assess emotional and behavioural needs, academic ability, and to identify the strengths and difficulties for each learner. These assessments inform targeted support and planning for learning and teaching. High quality personal learning plans, behavioural support plans and personalised therapeutic intervention programmes are produced for each child. The psychology team also support with transitions out of the school to help enable children and young people to move on in a very positive way.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The outstanding ethos and culture across the school. This is leading to all children and young people having high levels of attendance, exhibiting very good behaviour and engaging very well in their learning.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland 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.