



Education  
Scotland  
Foghlam Alba



**Corseford School  
Kilbarchan  
Renfrewshire  
23 June 2015**

Education Scotland inspect schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup> and young people know whether their school<sup>2</sup> provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with staff how they can improve the quality of care and education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher/senior managers and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities in which young people are involved. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of care and education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of care and education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the service is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit [www.educationscotland.gov.uk](http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk). Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'school' includes the nursery class or classes where appropriate.

## **Contents**

1. The school
2. Particular strengths of the school
3. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?
4. How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?
5. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?
6. What happens next?

### **1. The school**

Corseford School is a grant-aided special school owned and managed by Capability Scotland. It provides education for children and young people, aged five to 18 years, with additional support needs arising from complex physical, communication and health needs. Young people were placed in the service by ten Scottish local authorities. The roll was 24 when the school was inspected in May 2015. Young people's attendance was in line with the national average. Eighteen young people had a coordinated support plan. The service also provides short breaks for children and young people.

## **2. Key strengths of the school**

- Confident, happy, motivated learners who benefit from the rich communication environment.
- Staff's approach to helping young people to communicate and empowering them to make choices and decisions independently.
- High expectations, the strong sense of teamwork and commitment of staff to provide high-quality learning for children and young people.
- Outstanding support for learners' communication including using high-tech communication aids.
- The excellent leadership of the senior management team in meeting learning needs.

## **3. How well do children and young people learn and achieve?**

Children and young people in Corseford School are learning and achieving very well. They enjoy school, are very well cared for and respond positively to the high expectations that staff have for them. Across the school, staff have established a supportive and nurturing climate for learning where children and young people are empowered to communicate, make choices and do as much as they can for themselves. Overall, young people are very well motivated by the range of stimulating activities that get them actively involved in finding out things for themselves. For example, they predict outcomes in science experiments, accurately estimate journey times around and outside of school and conduct research to help with topic work. They have a very good understanding of their strengths, how well they are progressing and are proud of their successes. The school has established links with some local schools through a series of 'Corseford Connections' events where young people can develop friendships and learn alongside their peers. Partners, including the Royal Horticultural Society and Castle Semple Centre play an

important role in enhancing young people's learning, particularly outside the classroom. The school recognises the need to further develop these outdoor learning experiences.

At all stages, children and young people are making very good progress and achieve well in a range of activities in classrooms and beyond. Young people contribute effectively to school life and develop important skills in teamwork and communication through their involvement in the student council and Eco group. Their 'you said, we did' notice board keeps the whole school aware of the progress the student council is making. A recent eco action day of litter picking, planting and improving the school environment was planned to help the school, as it works toward achieving its third Eco-Schools Scotland Green Flag. Many partners contribute to young people's achievements, such as Sailability awards at Castle Semple and badges at the after-school Scout group. While these and other achievements are very well recognised and celebrated within school, there is scope to explore further the range of external awards young people can access.

Across the school, children and young people are making very good progress in their literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, with almost all achieving their learning targets. In literacy, they contribute positively to discussion, listening to others and expressing themselves confidently using a range of communication aids. Young people are also exploring Spanish culture and language and making very good progress in using Spanish in social situations. Recently, they welcomed children from a local primary school to their 'Café Espanol' where they were served Spanish snacks by Spanish-speaking waiters and waitresses. Young people have very good opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing skills in real-life situations, including through the independent living programme. For example, they create shopping lists and plan travel arrangements in order to buy items for simple cookery. In financial education, some young people run a Credit Union where they learn about managing money and banking through a number of practical activities. Children and young people are learning skills and strategies that help them

cope with challenging situations. They have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and how to make positive choices to keep themselves safe and well. Over the past two years all young people who left school achieved a good range of Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) qualifications at National 1 to 3 in addition to Personal Achievement and Personal Development awards. The school could make better use of data such as SQA results and personal achievements, to reflect on trends to inform further improvements.

#### **4. How well does the school support children and young people to develop and learn?**

The carefully planned curriculum focuses on developing meaningful skills for independent learning, life and work. Staff plan suitable experiences in and across curriculum areas. They should further develop these approaches which help young people make links across different aspects of their learning. The curriculum for the senior phase provides young people with choice and challenging experiences which build up skills that will help them move on successfully from school. For example, the residential trip to Aviemore allows young people to be independent, practise skills in an unfamiliar environment and to be active in the outdoors. The school also works well with a range of partners to provide high-quality work experience and access to college courses. The school should continue to develop the curriculum, including greater involvement of partners and taking full account of recent national guidance.

The school's approaches to identifying young people's learning needs and supporting their development are excellent. Teachers and support staff work very well together with therapists, nurses and other specialists to draw up detailed profiles based on highly effective assessments. All staff use this information very effectively to meet young people's learning, care, physical and communication needs. The support for young people's communication needs through the well-directed, consistent use of a range of high-tech communication aids, symbols, photographs and speech is outstanding. As a result of

this communication-friendly environment, all children and young people can access the curriculum, make decisions and be heard. The school has very strong partnerships with parents and carers who feel very well supported by the strong team approach to meeting their children's needs. They feel welcome in the school and commented positively on the regular and varied opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the school.

## **5. How well does the school improve the quality of its work?**

All staff are very committed to improving outcomes for young people. Parents and children felt that the school takes account of their views and uses them to improve the school. There are effective systems in place to ensure that staff reflect on their own practice and a range of ways to support them improve. Senior managers support, observe, monitor and provide useful feedback on the quality of assessment, learning and teaching. All staff have access to suitable professional learning opportunities. The school should now build on its existing practice to further develop arrangements to track learners' progress and achievement across all stages. The head of learning provision is an outstanding leader, with a clear vision for the on-going development of the school and associated services. The head of school is a very effective leader who is open, approachable and highly regarded by the whole school community. Together with the other senior managers, they have established a supportive climate of high expectations where all staff and young people are encouraged to take on leadership roles.

## **6. What happens next?**

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the school's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result, we will make no further evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified an aspect of innovative practice which we would like to explore further in order to share the practice with others. As a result we will work with

the school and Board of Governors in order to record and share more widely the innovative practice. We will ask the school, in discussion with the Board of Governors, to let parents know the outcome of the innovative practice visit(s).

We have agreed the following area for improvement with the school.

- Continue to develop the curriculum in line with national guidance, making use of information about attainment and achievement, including evaluating the impact of changes to date.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities/board of governors and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the HMIE publication *How good is our school?*.

Here are the evaluations for Corseford School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>excellent</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>very good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>very good</b>

**Managing Inspector:** Olwynne Clark  
23 June 2015

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

Additional inspection evidence, such as details of the quality indicator evaluations, for your school can be found on the Education Scotland website at

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/CorsefordResidentialSchoolRenfrewshire.asp>.

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