

# Summarised inspection findings

**Aberfoyle Primary School**

Stirling Council

20 February 2024

## Key contextual information

Aberfoyle Primary School is a small, rural school situated in the village of Aberfoyle in Stirling Council. The school has a catchment area covering Aberfoyle, Kinlochard and Braeval.

The headteacher has been in post since 2021 and is supported by a principal teacher. The school has 67 children, organised into three multi-composite classes. Almost all children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile seven. The school receives a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding.

### 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 headteacher and all staff know children very well as individuals. They work together effectively to create a learning environment which is calm and purposeful. Led by the headteacher, the whole school community contributed well to the development of the values of respect, responsibility, kindness, creativity and determination. Children talk confidently about how these values impact positively on their lives. As a result, relationships across the school are very positive and reflect well the school's vision, values and aims.
- Children throughout the school are friendly, articulate and well-mannered. All children contribute to the wider life of the school through participating in a number of pupil-led committees. For example, the Junior Management Group contribute their views on learning and teaching across the school. Their suggestions are fed back to staff to support ongoing improvements.
- Teachers use praise well to encourage and support children's learning. Almost all children engage very well in their learning. Children respond well to the opportunities they have to work independently and in pairs and groups. Teachers use flexible groupings across classes to support learning, for example in the context of reading. This is helping to ensure children's learning needs are met well.
- In almost all lessons, teachers explain the purpose of learning and support children to understand how they will be successful. In a few lessons, the pace of learning could be brisker. In most lessons, teachers make very good links to prior learning. They use questioning well to check children's understanding. Teachers should now extend questioning to develop children's higher-order thinking skills. Teachers provide written feedback to support children to understand their next steps in learning. Children have the opportunity to self- and peer-assess their learning, most notably in writing. They use this information and teacher feedback well to identify individual learning targets.
- All children benefit from regular opportunities to take their learning outdoors. Staff make good use of the school's outdoor spaces and nearby woodland area to enhance learning. As a

result, all children regularly have the opportunity to apply their learning and skills across the curriculum. Visitors and trips out of school enhance learning in a variety of contexts. For example, children recently visited a museum to explore different kinds of ships in the context of a topic on the Titanic.

- In the majority of lessons, digital technology is used well to enhance, support and extend learning. For example, older children use digital technology to apply mathematical learning in real life contexts such as planning and budgeting. Children record their learning through use of digital presentations and matrix bar codes to share learning with parents and visitors. As planned, teachers should now support children to further develop the use of digital technology to record and profile their learning achievements. This will help to support increased independence in their learning as they move through the school.
- Staff are at the early stages of introducing play experiences into younger children's daily routines and as part of learning. Children contribute to planning a few play experiences. For example, younger children recently contributed to the creation of the 'North Pole Post Office'. As planned, staff should continue to develop approaches to play, taking account of national practice guidance. This will help staff to support children to build progressively on their skills and experiences through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early and first levels.
- Teachers regularly engage in professional learning, for example around the nurture principles. This has impacted positively on the development of nurturing relationships. Senior leaders and teachers have rightly identified the need to continue to develop approaches to effective and creative learning and teaching. Teachers should continue to develop approaches which provide children with more opportunities to lead their own learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers effectively track the progress of all children including those experiencing barriers to their learning. Senior leaders and staff hold termly 'impact' meetings to discuss children's progress. Where children are at risk of not maintaining good progress in their learning, teachers and senior leaders agree strategies and interventions to address this. Clear measures and outcomes are put in place to ensure approaches are evaluated and adapted if appropriate. These approaches are contributing to raising attainment strategies and supporting children to make very good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Staff recently reviewed approaches to planning to ensure progression across levels. Teachers plan children's learning termly across the curriculum using local authority and school progression pathways. Children have a voice in planning learning linked to topics. They share with teachers what they already know and what they want to know more about at the start of each topic. As planned, teachers should now provide opportunities for children to be more involved in contributing to planning their learning across the curriculum.
- The headteacher has developed a helpful assessment calendar which identifies what needs to be assessed and when. This supports teachers to use a range of assessment approaches, including standardised and commercial assessments, to measure children's progress within literacy and numeracy. Teachers gather samples of children's work throughout the year and evidence gathered from assessments. They use this information well to monitor, track and record children's progress in literacy and numeracy. This information supports professional judgements on achievement of CfE levels. All teaching staff engage in moderation across all stages. This is helping to ensure consistency of teacher judgements of achievement of a level. As planned, teachers should build on these moderation activities to include more opportunities to moderate with colleagues from other schools.

## 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

## 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, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. In session 2022-2023, almost all children achieved national standards in reading and listening and talking. Most children achieved national standards in writing and numeracy. A few children exceeded national expectations in both literacy and numeracy. Children who require additional support with their learning make good progress towards individual targets.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children listen respectfully to staff and other children. At early level, most children listen well to a story and answer questions about the story. At first level, children talk confidently about texts and answer questions to deepen their understanding of new topics. At second level, children confidently apply a range of techniques when delivering presentations to peers. They should continue to practise speaking to a wider range of audiences to improve confidence in delivery.

### Reading

- All children benefit from access to a range of reading materials provided by class and school libraries. They have regular opportunities for personal reading and can explain preferences for different types of authors. At early level, children use taught sounds to blend and decode simple words confidently. At first level, most children read fluently and with expression. They confidently make predictions about what might happen next in stories. Children answer well a range of literal and evaluative questions about texts. At second level, most children confidently find and select information from a range of sources. They share their thoughts about structure, characters and setting as well as the main ideas in the book they are reading. They answer increasingly complex questions about texts and confidently explain their answers with evidence.

### Writing

- At early level, most children produce detailed line drawings and write simple sentences using capital letters and full stops. Children at first and second level write for a variety of purposes and contexts, for example in learning which uses links across different subjects. Children's personalised writing targets supports them to make good progress in developing their skills as writers. At first level, children write reports, diary entries and letters using appropriate punctuation and vocabulary. Children at second level write confidently to convey information, persuade and evaluate information. Children have regular opportunities for personalisation and choice in writing. This has helped to raise attainment in writing.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy. Across early and first level, children would benefit from more opportunities to apply their knowledge of numeracy in open-ended, unfamiliar contexts across the curriculum.

## **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, most children order numbers correctly within the range 0-20. They add and subtract to 10 with accuracy. At first level, almost all children round numbers to the nearest 100 and 1000. They identify the value of zero in three-digit and four-digit numbers and show a good understanding of the four operations. At second level, almost all children add and subtract multiples of 10, 100 and 1000 from whole numbers. They are confident at comparing fractions, percentages and decimals.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, almost all children accurately identify two-dimensional shapes and categorise them by properties including colour and size. Most children confidently create and continue patterns using two-dimensional shapes. At first level, most children use appropriate mathematical language to identify and categorise three-dimensional objects and identify symmetry within two-dimensional shapes. At second level, most children confidently measure and draw a range of angles. They use appropriate mathematical language to describe and classify angles within shapes.

## **Information handling**

- At early level, almost all children use knowledge of colour, shape and size correctly to match and sort items. They present information well in a bar graph. At first level, almost all children create bar graphs and extract information accurately. At second level, almost all children interpret information and draw accurate conclusions from graphs. Across all stages, children should continue to develop their skills in displaying information, particularly using digital technology.

## **Attainment over time**

- School attainment data shows high patterns of attainment in literacy and numeracy for most children over time. Staff have continued to maintain and raise attainment through tracking robustly the progress of individual children. This allows them to implement interventions if children are at risk of not making good progress. Inspection activity confirms that overall, most children are on track to achieve national levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. As planned, senior leaders should now develop further tracking systems to demonstrate children's progress across other areas of the curriculum.

## **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and rewarded. For example, through Star Writer and Maths Wizard awards and annual awards such as The Community Cup and the Scott Tutin Sports Award. Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies, in school newsletters and in the Strathard Community newsletter.
- A strong feature of the school is the range of valuable opportunities provided for children to develop skills for learning, life and work. All children participate in mixed stage 'Friday Skills Sessions' which are developed in line with children's interests and staff, community and parent expertise. Through these sessions, children learn a range of skills, such as first aid, fire safety, gardening and video animation. Children also have opportunities to attend a range of lunchtime and after school clubs which support them to develop skills, such as running, writing, chess and coding. The majority of older children are currently participating in the Junior Duke Award. Children talk enthusiastically about how they are developing teamworking and organisational skills through participation in these activities.

- All children are members of school leadership groups such as the Junior Management Team, Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO), the Eco Committee, Sports Leaders and the Press Gang. Children are proud of the difference they are making to the life and the work of the school through these leadership roles. For example, the JRSO successfully campaigned for traffic calming measures outside the school. Members of the Junior Management Team recently participated in a Young Leaders of Learning pilot project to share ideas for school improvements. Children can articulate how these leadership roles have improved their confidence and communication skills.
- Senior leaders track children's participation in skills groups, clubs and leadership committees. This is helping staff to target children at risk of missing out on opportunities to achieve and experience success. As planned, staff should now support children to record and track their achievements and the skills for learning, life and work they are developing in these contexts.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff have a sound knowledge of the social and economic contexts of children and families. They take sensitive and effective action to mitigate against barriers children face. This is ensuring every child can engage fully in all aspects of school life and activities, whatever their personal circumstances.
- The headteacher's rationale for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) spending is based on a robust analysis of a range of qualitative and quantitative data. This allows her to identify and target the needs of specific groups of children. The headteacher consults with parents about PEF spending. PEF is focused on provision of staff to work closely with groups of children to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy, attendance and wellbeing. The range of interventions are having a positive impact. Evaluations show that children are more engaged in their learning, have improving attendance and are making accelerated progress in literacy and numeracy.

## Other relevant evidence

- School attendance figures are generally above national figures. Senior leaders work closely with families where attendance levels decrease for any reason. Successful approaches to improve attendance include use of 'soft start' and reminders to parents of the importance of regular attendance. The school is part of a local learning community initiative to promote and manage attendance.
- Strong partnerships ensure effective transitions are in place from nursery to P1 and P7 to McLaren High School. Enhanced transitions are in place to meet individual children's needs where appropriate.



## 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.