

Summarised inspection findings

Eassie Primary School

Angus Council

26 June 2018

Key contextual information

The headteacher is also responsible for Glamis Primary School as a partnership arrangement. At the time of the inspection the roll of pupils at Eassie Primary School is 17, with all educated in one multi-composite class of P1 to P7 children. The class is taught by two teachers in a job share arrangement and whose weekly contractual non class contact time is covered by the principal teacher.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement, which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- The headteacher has been in post for two school sessions. He is confident in his role and in establishing positive relationships across the school, with its community and with partners. He has had a significant impact on the positive ethos of the school, the development of effective teamwork and improved learning experiences for children.
- The headteacher and staff recognise the time is right to revise the school's vision and set of values. They are in the process of evaluating the school's work to ensure a common understanding of what the school aspires to achieve for learners and the ambition it has for them to be successful. The headteacher has accurately identified the need to continually refresh the school's curriculum rationale so that it now reflects the school's emphasis on outdoor learning, resilience and relevance to the school's unique context. Staff should take steps to further promote equalities as a feature of the school's values. The refresh of the curriculum rationale together with the shared vision and values should be taken forward in consultation with all stakeholders and embedded in the life of the school.
- In developing the school's approaches to sustaining and further improving attainment, the staff continue to focus on high-quality learning, teaching and assessment and developing the curriculum. The school has correctly identified these aspects in its strategic plans for the next school session. The headteacher should also take forward the school's strategic plans to consult widely with parents and partners in the self-evaluation of the school's initiatives and improvement priorities.
- Staff work very effectively together as a small team. They are highly motivated by changes to the school's provision through partnership with Glamis Primary School. This joint working is valued by staff and helps them make accurate professional judgements about Curriculum for Excellence levels. Children are also motivated by the links they have with others in the partnership school. This has helped foster a strong sense of pride and achievement and supports transitions from nursery into primary one. The school works closely with other schools in the cluster to take forward improvement priorities. These priorities are created as a result of understanding its own rural context and considering the features it has in common with a wider group of small schools.

- Staff across the school are dedicated to achieving success for all children. They understand the demographics and unique rural context well. As a result, they know the children and families very well and understand learners' individual needs. They place high importance on supporting the emotional and social needs of children and have created a warm and welcoming environment where all are valued. Staff have built effective partnerships and relationships with local partners in the community. The school is regarded positively by its community and the headteacher is ensuring established links are sustained and new links developed leading to an enhanced curriculum.
- The headteacher encourages distributed leadership and communicates effectively to support staff in identifying change in their own practice and across the work of the school. This includes children having a say about how to improve the school, well-planned transitions and a growing emphasis on outdoor learning. The clear focus of the headteacher on improvement has led to a wide and varied range of resources, which staff use skilfully to meet the needs of all learners.
- Staff make effective use of challenge questions from the national self-evaluation toolkit *How good is our school?* (4th edition) when evaluating the work of the school. They work effectively in partnership with staff from Glamis Primary School and are developing a shared vision of Curriculum for Excellence. Staff demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and are keen to learn from others to ensure they continue to refine and improve their practice. They value the opportunities they have for professional dialogue and liaison for planning for learning. This helps them to regularly support one another in improving consistently high-quality learning and teaching. Staff access a variety of professional learning opportunities including peer visits and regular cluster school meetings. We have encouraged staff to continue to look outwards at practice beyond their own cluster and local authority to further refine their effective practice in this multi-composite single-class school.
- Children in the upper stages are contributing to school improvement through their leadership responsibilities as ambassadors and as house captains. They have full involvement in improving the outdoor learning environment. Children value opportunities to undertake leadership responsibilities. The school should now build on this practice to give children increased roles as leaders and taking responsibilities. There is scope to increase the range of ways children contribute to evaluating the school's work. The school should involve children more systematically in evaluating school improvements, making use of recently published national guidance to support this.
- The school benefits from a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and identifies collaborative opportunities with the partner school as priority. Taking forward its use of wellbeing wheels to measure the impact of health and wellbeing achievements will help evaluate successes and plan next steps. The school has appropriately identified the need to enhance learning through the use of digital technologies. As planned, it should measure the impact digital technologies has on learners' engagement.

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's vision, values and aims are incorporated into the life of Eassie Primary School and impact positively on children's learning experiences. Positive relationships reflect the school's commitment to nurturing successful, confident and responsible learners. All children are motivated to learn. Most work well cooperatively, and are developing skills for life, learning and work.
- Staff plan effectively for lessons and use a wide range of resources to support learning. Children are developing independence as learners and access a variety of resources to motivate them. They exercise personalisation and choice through a range of tasks and resources and the ways in which they share their learning together.
- Staff work closely with partners and local businesses in the community to enhance the curriculum. Children benefit from the well-planned 'Tattietastic' project and take opportunities to lead their own learning. They successfully manage and organise the school's community café held regularly for, and well attended by, the wider community. This develops children's confidence and social skills. Children participate regularly in Active Schools' clubs and sporting events improving their growth mind-set and resilience.
- Children lead their own learning through regularly planned activities such as the 'daily 5' literacy approaches and 'daily 3' approaches to numeracy. They share their strengths and personal targets for learning in literacy and numeracy. Children regularly share their views on learning and progress. These are displayed and shared in a variety of effective ways around the school.
- Children make regular use of digital technologies to support learning. They access online games to support learning in numeracy and mathematics. They use search engines effectively for research. Children create electronic presentations to share their learning about contexts such as renewable energy. Children's wellbeing and wider achievements are enhanced by encouraging physical activity through virtual athletics. They are developing numeracy skills through comparing data. Staff use carefully selected computer writing tools to develop children's confidence in writing.
- Teachers make effective use of formative assessment and provide children with helpful feedback orally and in writing and in the use of 'learning intention tickets'. Children are developing skills in giving helpful feedback to their peers on learning and how to improve. Staff should build on peer assessment to further develop children's understanding of the language of learning.

- Overall, staff share learning intentions in most lessons and children are clear about how to achieve success. Children discuss the skills they are developing with growing confidence. Staff differentiate learning tasks appropriately and select resources to support independent learning. Teachers lead effective partnerships with supportive adults working alongside in the learning zone to further enhance the learning experiences of children.
- Overall the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers use questioning effectively to encourage children to think in more depth. Children enjoy consistently high-quality learning experiences which promote enquiry and curiosity for all learners. Teachers provide appropriately challenging tasks that enable children to work successfully together and independently on a wide range of interesting activities.
- Learning outdoors is a key feature of learning and teaching. Children take responsibilities to grow fruit and vegetables and use these in cooking. They benefit from learning with peers from neighbouring schools at annual highland games, visiting Kinnordy Estate and regularly participate in cooperative events. Children clearly articulate the range of outdoor learning activities and how this develops the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence.
- Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated through weekly class meetings, displays on walls, digital applications and a record of school achievements big book. Children strive to achieve school 'colour awards' for demonstrating leadership, independence, teamwork or citizenship. Partners support awards for a range of achievements including craft and enterprise. Children's wider achievements are tracked and monitored and participation levels in sport and other clubs is high.
- Teachers regularly discuss attainment tracking information with the headteacher. They devise action plans and targets to plan interventions and improve attainment outcomes for all children.
- Children would benefit further from increased planned opportunities to apply and extend their literacy and numeracy skills as they contribute to the life of the school and its wider community. As agreed with the school, there is scope for teachers to encourage children to make explicit links to applying their skills to the world of work.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

- The school has a curriculum rationale that shapes the curriculum delivery. This vision for learners is evident in the way all stakeholders understand what the school is trying to achieve through its curriculum. Children experience a broad curriculum based on a three-year planning cycle. This helps ensure children benefit from all Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. The headteacher should now work with staff to refresh the curriculum to reflect the national as well as local priorities such as Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).
- In literacy, the framework for progression in core skills supports the school's approaches to motivate children to read regularly and with confidence. Learning within the literacy and English pathways is enhanced through partnerships with the local community and visiting authors. Recent work to improve the quality of teaching in phonics, spelling and reading has improved the quality of the curriculum for learners.
- A newly developed policy for the curriculum focuses on developing skills of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. While the school maintains a focus on developing children's literacy and numeracy skills, these now need to be further strengthened by embedding them in learning across the curriculum.
- Currently the school has progression pathways in all areas of the curriculum integrated in a three-year planning cycle. The school's manageable processes for monitoring and evaluating children's progress results in staff having clear information on attainment for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. This allows for effective planning and continued improvement in these areas including targeted support for children who may face additional challenges. Staff employ a variety of creative approaches to raise the attainment and achievement of those who require additional support with their learning.
- Children develop a wide range of skills in meaningful, real and relevant contexts through partnership with local businesses.
- There is scope to refresh the structure of the curriculum to support a more cohesive approach to delivering the curriculum across the four contexts for learning. The school should further develop and define interdisciplinary learning (IDL) to ensure a shared understanding of how to help children make natural, relevant and meaningful links across learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Partnership working is a strength of the school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire all parents agree that partnerships with the school are strong. All parents agree the school is well led, standards of learning and teaching are high and that as parents, they are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school.
- All parents are very supportive of their children's learning. Staff work effectively with them to support the needs of individuals. Parents value the range of opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. The online learning newsfeed, along with homework grids, helps parents to understand how they can support their children's learning and achievements.
- The school encourages parents and the wider community to share their skills and expertise and parents greatly appreciate this. Learning activities in class including science and technology, cooking, crafts, numeracy and reading are all enhanced through parent participation.
- The Parent Council is kept informed about the work of the school and is consulted about school improvement priorities including planning for the use of PEF. Parents feel their views are listened to and inform school improvements.

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, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion **good**

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Children are confident and happy in school. They feel safe and well cared for. Across the school, children feel included and engaged in decisions about their learning. Responsibility is encouraged in a range of ways, including the allocation of specific responsibility roles to children. They feel valued and respected in their responsibility roles such as sports ambassador, school ambassador, pupil council and house captains.
- High expectations of behaviour are evident throughout the school. The calm, purposeful environment in classes and around the school helps to ensure children enjoy learning and socialising together. Children benefit from supportive relationships where peer support is encouraged. Staff and partners have been proactive in promoting positive relationships. Children are embracing restorative approaches when disagreements occur. This ensures children feel listened to and secure about discussing their feelings. Staff are positive role models to children and promote positive behaviour in a sensitive manner.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the wellbeing indicators. They create opportunities for children to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles, keeping safe, and personal development appropriate to their age and stage. There is scope to further develop the curriculum framework for health and wellbeing to ensure children understand what the wellbeing indicators mean to them and their progress towards health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Across the school, children feel included and engaged in decisions about their learning. Children's views and ideas are actively sought, listened to and valued. Their views are evident in all aspects of school life, and impact on how the school directs improvements. The recently built outdoor zone, and a newly designed school mosaic have been created from children's ideas.
- The children, parents and staff highly value the opportunities the school environment offers for learning outdoors. Children have a great sense of pride in the recently developed outdoor learning zone and make full use of the variety of zoned areas in their playground. The well-developed outdoor area and gardens allow children to improve their wellbeing. They use the outdoor areas to play sports, and access nurturing spaces. In these spaces they can develop skills in growing food from plants as well taking time for reflection in quiet places such as the memorial bench in the garden zone.
- The school has good awareness of its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and for children who are care experienced. All children receive two hours of quality physical education each week.

- Children are developing greater resilience through the growth mindset approaches and planned opportunities to participate in cooperative challenge events with Glamis Primary School. Staff have individualised educational programmes in place for those children requiring additional support. There is scope to make targets more meaningful to children through short term and achievable targets, which are reviewed regularly and shared with parents and staff.
- The school is a nurturing and inclusive environment. Children are developing a greater awareness of inclusion and respect for others through the disability awareness cooperative challenge day. All children have learned some Makaton signing to sing a few songs. Attendance levels are high and there are no exclusions. The school should consider ways in which it can build on its successful approaches disability awareness and widen this into other protected characteristics. This will ensure children understand the importance of equality and are well prepared for their futures in the wider world.
- The school has received a very low number of complaints over the past two years. It would be helpful to clarify and formalise approaches to recording incidents, including the outcome of its own investigations.

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

- The school's approaches to raising attainment result in most children making very good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Attainment is tracked effectively for all children as individuals. Staff make good use of a range of assessments to support teachers' accurate professional judgement of attainment and progress in Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers make good use of National Benchmarks to support their understanding of achievement.
- Tracking is monitored continuously through regular attainment meetings with the headteacher. This helps ensure children are making appropriate progress. Overall, the school's predicted Curriculum for Excellence levels accurately reflect what children are achieving in literacy and numeracy.
- Almost all children at early level, are achieving the appropriate level in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy and mathematics. Almost all children at first level, achieve the appropriate level in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy and mathematics. By second level, most children achieve the appropriate level in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy and mathematics.

Literacy and English

- Overall, the standard of literacy and English attainment across the school is very good. Most children are making expected progress and a few are attaining beyond expected levels. Children who require additional support are making appropriate progress.
- **Reading**
At the early level, all children are confident in using their phonic skills to read new words and read with increasing fluency and expression. They enjoy reading to one another and with adults. At first level, all children read with enthusiasm and for pleasure. They are making very good progress in developing sophisticated vocabulary. They read confidently in reading circles and show very good levels of comprehension. By second level, most children are reading a wide range of texts and enjoy making personal choices of texts. They use their skills effectively to support younger readers in the class. Most read regularly for pleasure and to find information.
- **Writing**
At the early level, all children use their reading skills to write words independently and spell accurately. They write simple stories using capitals and full stops with accuracy. At first level, all children are skilled in using conjunctions to compose imaginative texts. They are beginning to write well-crafted pieces of extended writing for a variety of purposes. By second level, most

children are secure in their progress and writing is well supported. A few pieces of writing are of a high standard. There is scope for all children to apply their writing skills in more varied contexts across the curriculum.

■ **Talking and listening**

At the early level, all children speak confidently about their learning and respond well to positive encouragement from staff and peers. They are skilled as independent learners and follow instructions well. At first level, all children talk confidently about their learning and listen attentively to one another when discussing texts they have read. By second level, most children are confident when talking to adults and visitors to the school. They talk positively about their learning and are confident about sharing their views.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Across the school, most children achieve predicted levels of attainment. The targeted interventions in place ensure that children who require additional support make satisfactory progress with their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measurement

- At the early level, all children count forwards and backwards and create sequences with numbers to 20. They add mentally to 20, and use practical objects or number lines to subtract within 20. They order days of the week and answer questions about time sequences with confidence. At first level, all children use varied mental maths strategies to add and subtract two-digit numbers. Children's understanding of measurement using standard units of length and weight is very good. All children tell the time using analogue and digital clocks. By second level, most children work well with a range of whole numbers up to and beyond 100,000. They link their knowledge of multiplication and division work and fractions with confidence.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, all children name 2D shapes with confidence. At first level, all children follow instructions and record routes using right angle turns and the four main compass points. They have mathematical language to describe angles and properties of shapes. By second level, most children understand diagonal properties of quadrilaterals and use nets to create 3D models of cubes, and cuboids. By second level, most children use protractors well to measure angles.

Information handling

- Overall children analyse data confidently. At the early level, all children sort objects into sets and draw simple diagrams to sort everyday objects. At first level, all children use tally marks to gather information and present this as bar graphs. They interpret information in tables, charts and bar graphs. Staff recognise that further work in this area is needed to ensure all children display information with increased accuracy. By second level, most children are developing confidence when investigating, collating and organising information using a variety of pie charts, bar graphs and diagrams.

Attainment over time

- Overall, most children are making very good progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. All children at early and first level are making very good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics and by second level most children are making very good progress. Children who require additional support are making appropriate progress.

- The school recognises the need to further develop robust procedures to track progression through levels and has recently introduced a new tracking system. This will help support the monitoring of the impact of targeted interventions on raising the attainment and achievement for all children.

Overall quality of achievement

- Children's achievements across the school are very good. There is a clear focus on all children developing skills for life and work.
- Overall, children experience a broad range of opportunities which are helping them develop confidence, learn new skills, experience competition and develop their personal interests further. The school recognises the need to continue to plan regular opportunities for children to participate in events such as the community café, sporting events and the cooperative challenge days. This helps them focus on the skills they are developing and the transferrable nature of many of these.
- Across the school, children are developing the skills and attributes of the four capacities very well. Their confidence and leadership skills are being utilised effectively through the peer support in the playground and learning zone.
- Achievements are recognised and celebrated regularly at weekly class meetings and shared digitally with parents. The school has recently developed an approach to monitoring and tracking personal achievements, which will allow staff to identify where opportunities can be planned to address gaps where necessary.

Equity for all learners

- The school has a positive approach to supporting children to engage well in their learning. The focus on relationships and behaviour is benefiting all children through motivating them and encouraging parents as partners. Targeted interventions such as the 'Lego club' support learners with their confidence building and turn taking.
- The school has appropriately identified the need to enhance learning through the use of digital technologies. The purchase of laptops to support learning through targeted interventions using literacy and numeracy resources will lead to enhanced learning and raise attainment when combined with high-quality teaching. The impact of these are not yet fully evident but progress in improving children's engagement is developing well.

Setting choice of QI: 1.4 Leadership and management of staff

This indicator highlights the importance of sound governance and fair and proper recruitment and selection of staff. It focuses on accountability, responsibility and shared values as important features of building and sustaining a highly-professional staff team. Effective empowerment of staff and partners with due regard to wellbeing and positive relationships is a key feature of a successful professional team.

- Governance framework
- Building and sustaining a professional staff team
- Staff wellbeing and pastoral support

- The school has an appropriate focus on improvement and the quality of its provision. The headteacher is also responsible for Glamis Primary School and shares leadership and management effectively with the principal teacher. Roles and curriculum responsibilities are clearly defined and time in each school is shared appropriately. Staff at Eassie Primary School are clear about communications and work closely and effectively together. Teachers are dedicated in their roles and work enthusiastically to bring about improvement to learners' experiences. They are reflective about their practices and strive to develop their professional skills and knowledge. Overall, the school leadership is shared successfully across the team of staff together with partners and parents leading to high-quality outcomes for children. There is scope to ensure monitoring and evaluation of new initiatives are measured and analysed by the headteacher and staff to ensure continuous school improvements.
- Staff are recruited in-line with current local authority regulations and policies. The Parent Council was actively involved in the recruitment of the current headteacher and is pleased with the overall impact the headteacher is having on the positive ethos of the school. Parents are appreciative of the experience and expertise of the headteacher and the ways in which relationships amongst children are very positive due to the encouragement and feedback staff provide children. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and founded on respect. The capacity of the school in leading its improvement priorities is strong. Teachers are committed to career-long professional development and know the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) standards. They have recently undertaken validation of their professional update. Staff look for collaborative approaches to learn from colleagues in varied settings and other local authorities. The development of the curriculum for literacy and numeracy is leading to positive outcomes in children's progress and interesting learning experiences.
- Staff support one another well through effective communication and shared understanding of the school's aims. The management of part-time contracts supports the opportunity for staff to liaise together and plan for learning. The strong working relations amongst the staff team provide sustained leadership of learning. Much exchange of information is informal and verbal in nature. This is appropriate for responsive and prompt action to any concerns or sharing of information. Most parents are very satisfied with the open-door policies of the school and find all staff to be approachable. The school should review its informal exchanges of information to ensure all staff have clear responsibilities and lines of accountability. This will support all staff who support children in their learning.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.