

Summarised inspection findings

Fyvie School

Aberdeenshire Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Fyvie School and Nursery Class is a non-denominational school in the village of Fyvie in Aberdeenshire. The school catchment area includes Fyvie village and the surrounding rural area. The current roll is 110 children organised across five classes. All children live within Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 5 to 10. The headteacher has been in post for a period of five years. She recently returned to her substantive post following a period of secondment.

1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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

- There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing over the past two years. This has negatively impacted the pace of change and the progress of improvements. The headteacher has recently returned from a period of secondment. Since her return, she has worked with staff to create a calmer, more nurturing learning environment. The headteacher now needs to work closely with all members of 'Team Fyvie' to build on and accelerate the pace of change to improve outcomes for all children.
- In 2019, the headteacher worked with staff, children and parents to create the school's vision, values and aims. Recent work to reaffirm the school's values is helping children to become clearer on expectations. This is beginning to contribute to positive improvements in children's behaviour and engagement with learning. The headteacher is aware further work is now required to ensure a strong understanding of the vision, values and aims is embedded across the school community.
- The headteacher has recently resumed self-evaluation activities, for example by seeking views of children, parents and staff through surveys. The headteacher needs to now strategically manage the pace of change. Improvement priorities need to be tightly focused on what will make the most difference to children's learning and progress. This should include a closer focus on improvements to learning, teaching and assessment, with clear action plans for implementing improvements. It will be important that staff are fully involved in regular reviews of improvement priorities using robust evidence.
- Due to changes in leadership, quality assurance activities have not been robust or undertaken as regularly as in previous years. Some aspects of quality assurance have recently restarted but are not yet having a strong enough impact on improving outcomes for children. The headteacher needs to more robustly monitor the quality of learning and sample children's work more regularly. Working with staff, the headteacher needs to ensure that feedback from these activities leads to sufficient improvements in the quality of learning, teaching and assessment.

- The headteacher recently re-established termly meetings with staff to discuss children's progress. The headteacher now needs to ensure that both she and class teachers have a stronger understanding of individual children's progress over time. She should work with teachers to develop a more strategic approach to raising attainment, ensuring decisions on children's progress are based on a range of data and reliable assessment evidence. Teachers need to develop a shared understanding of what they need to do to plan for and deliver high-quality learning, teaching and assessment that improves outcomes for all children, including those with barriers to learning. This will help teachers to accurately identify ways to target gaps in children's learning and improve children's progress in literacy and numeracy.
- The headteacher has recently re-established teacher's professional review and development discussions. Teachers are beginning to link their professional development with professional learning and the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards. A few teachers lead pupil leadership groups. Further work is required to ensure all staff contribute more actively to leadership of change.
- The majority of children feel staff listen to their views, but they are not clear on how this leads to improvement or change in the school. A minority of children are members of pupil leadership groups, such as digital leaders, pupil council and the pupil participation group. Children are enthusiastic about the potential for these roles to make a difference to the life and the work of the school. As planned, the headteacher and staff should continue to support children to make a meaningful contribution to change and improvement.
- Most staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of children. Currently Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) spend is focused on improving social and emotional wellbeing and engagement in learning for identified children. Going forward, approaches supported by PEF should be clearly planned with specific measures of success. The headteacher needs to ensure the impact of interventions to raise attainment are more closely monitored and evaluated.
- The school benefits from an active Parent Council who provide a range of effective support, including for fundraising initiatives. The headteacher regularly meets with the Parent Council, however they are not yet consulted in relation to PEF spend. The headteacher plans to further involve the Parent Council and the wider parent body in evaluating the work of the school.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Children across the school experience a caring and nurturing ethos. Relationships between staff and children across the school are positive. Most children are respectful of one another and of staff. Most children are keen to learn. At times, a few children talk over others and have to be reminded to follow instructions during lessons. Most children know the school values of 'happy, achieving, respectful, everyone together'. Staff should now ensure the school values are fully embedded to underpin the ethos of the school.
- Staff are supportive of each other and work together well to share ideas and resources. Most teachers have engaged in professional learning to support their understanding of approaches to nurture and inclusion. As a result, staff have made adaptations to learning environments, for example, the creation of calm spaces and 'cosy corners'. This is helping a few children to better regulate their emotions when required.
- Overall, while there are some areas of strength, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable. The school's learning, teaching and assessment toolkit sets out clear expectations for high-quality learning and teaching. The headteacher and teachers need now to use the framework to identify and share standards to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- In the majority of lessons, most children can discuss their tasks but are not consistently clear about the purpose of their learning. Children should now be more involved in identifying how they will know they have been successful in their learning. This will help them to become more confident in assessing their own work and that of their peers.
- In a majority of lessons, staff provide clear instructions. In a minority of lessons, staff make links with prior learning. The majority of lessons are overly teacher led and directed towards the whole class. As a result, learning and teaching is not always appropriately matched to children's levels of ability. Across the school, children should have more opportunities to lead their learning, including through being provided with greater personalisation and choice.
- In a few classes, too much time is allocated to activities which lack meaningful purpose. Teachers need to now ensure learning is appropriately supportive and challenging to allow children to make better progress in their learning. There is a need to ensure a more effective use of learning time. The headteacher should monitor more closely class timetables and practice to ensure time is used effectively, focusing on purposeful learning.
- In the minority of lessons, teachers use questioning to promote children's thinking. Teachers now need to make more effective use of questioning to address misconceptions and to encourage children to think about and to explain their learning. Teachers need to check for

understanding on a regular basis and should develop their use of higher order questions to challenge and improve children's understanding of their learning.

- Across the school, the quality of feedback given by teachers to children is variable and does not always identify next steps in children's learning. Teachers should agree a consistent approach to the use of written and verbal feedback across the school. It will be important to ensure feedback supports children to have a clearer understanding of their strengths and next steps in learning.
- Teachers at the early level are beginning to develop play-based approaches to learning and teaching. Teachers are well placed to develop their confidence in the use of the learning environment to promote children's creativity, curiosity and independence. Teachers should now plan play experiences in line with national practice guidance. This will support them to deliver progressive, quality play experiences for children.
- Most teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards as a teaching tool to structure teaching. Children use digital tablets to carry out research and access games. Teachers should now develop further the use of digital technology to develop children's digital skills progressively.
- The extensive school grounds offer opportunities for learning outdoors. While children enjoy learning outdoors, activities provided are not of a consistently high quality. There is significant potential to develop children's outdoor learning skills further. Teachers should now plan progressive outdoor learning activities, drawing on their recent professional learning in this area.
- Teachers use local authority curriculum pathways to support planning for the curriculum. Teachers are not yet consistently planning to build on children's prior learning. Teachers need to review planning approaches to ensure all children are making sufficient progress across all curriculum areas.
- Teachers use a range of summative assessments to monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers have correctly identified a need to improve their use of formative assessment strategies to enhance children's learning. Overall teachers' assessment of children's progress is not yet consistently reliable. Assessment evidence does not link clearly to tracking of all children's progress against national Benchmarks. As a result, the data gathered does not always inform planning next steps well enough to lead to improvements in children's attainment. Teachers need to work together to improve their understanding of national standards and assessment. The headteacher should proceed with plans to provide more opportunities for moderation within the school and with colleagues in other schools. This will support teachers to develop a shared understanding of national standards across the curriculum.
- The headteacher meets with teachers at key points in the year to discuss how well children are progressing. These processes need to be used more effectively to track children's learning journey over time. There now needs to be a clearer focus during tracking discussions on the attainment and achievement of individual children, identified groups and cohorts.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use local authority progression pathways to plan children's learning. These are not yet being used consistently to help all children to build on prior knowledge. The headteacher needs to work with staff to ensure that planning is used more effectively across all stages to improve children's progress in all curriculum areas.
- Children learn about different religions through lessons in religious and moral education. This work is supported by visits from the local minister and visits by children to the local church. Teachers now need to provide children with progressive opportunities to develop their understanding of issues relating to equality and diversity.
- All children learn French as a modern language. The school has recently started some work with children in relation to Doric. Children take part in two hours of physical education each week.
- Children at all stages have access to fiction and non-fiction texts from the school library. This contributes to the development of a reading culture in the school. Dyslexia friendly texts have recently been purchased. The addition of a wider range of texts would be valued by children in the upper stages.
- Children across the school have opportunities to learn outdoors. Staff are beginning to use outdoor spaces to support curricular learning. Staff should now maximise the potential of the extensive school grounds and develop a progressive and skills-based approach to outdoor learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Regular use is made of social media to promote school events and to share information that may be helpful for parents, for example, for children who require additional support with their learning.
- Parents are invited in to participate in school assemblies and community café events, such as the Christmas and Scots cafés. A few parents would like more regular communication about their children's progress and more opportunities to learn with their child. Plans are in place to further develop the community café format to provide parents with the opportunity to be more directly involved with children's learning. This will help parents better support children's progress with their learning.
- The school is well supported by parent volunteers and an active Parent Council. This partnership has supported the securing of funding for a school polytunnel. Parents support the school to maintain and enhance the school grounds and gardens.
- The Parent Council receives regular updates from the headteacher. Partnership with the Parent Council has supported the development of a policy relating to recognising and celebrating children's achievements. The headteacher plans to further involve the Parent Council and wider parent body in evaluating the work of the school.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- Staff know children well and demonstrate nurturing approaches which benefit all children. The majority of children say they feel safe and most feel that they have someone to talk to about their worries or concerns. Across the school, most children are well behaved. Staff support a few children to regulate their emotions, for example through use of consistent language and nurturing approaches. Most staff have received effective professional learning on trauma. This is helping to ensure staff have calm and consistent approaches to support children to re-engage positively with their learning when they find situations challenging.
- A few children and parents have concerns about how the school deals with bullying. To address this, the headteacher has recently revised the positive relationships and anti-bullying policies. The headteacher should now work with staff, parents and children to ensure there is a shared understanding across the school community about processes to address concerns.
- Staff support children to reflect on their wellbeing through termly wellbeing assessments. Teachers ensure follow up conversations for children to discuss their assessments. Children are developing their understanding of the national wellbeing indicators and can give examples of how they feel safe, healthy and included in school. Teachers should continue to develop the use of wellbeing indicators during learning activities. This will ensure all children can speak confidently about what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. The headteacher has begun to analyse information from wellbeing assessments to identify areas to be addressed. It would be useful to gather and use this data to track and monitor overall wellbeing trends and progress. This will help staff to plan appropriate approaches and interventions to support children.
- Staff work well together and with partners to support children who require additional help with their learning. Appropriate child's plans have recently been put in place for children who require them. The headteacher needs to ensure that parents and children are involved fully in child-planning processes. This will support children to better understand their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Going forward, it will be important to ensure that targets are clear and that children's progress is more regularly monitored and evaluated.
- The headteacher has recognised the need to review approaches to teaching and learning about health and wellbeing. As planned, staff should review the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure it addresses effectively diversity, equality, and how to challenge discrimination.
- With the support of the local authority and partners, the headteacher is developing robust systems in line with statutory requirements. Any critical incidents are now being recorded in line with local authority processes. There have been no exclusions for the past year. The

headteacher should continue to develop whole school and targeted approaches to wellbeing, equality and inclusion.

- Children are becoming more aware of their rights through school assemblies. Teachers should consider how children's rights can be used more readily in daily classroom and school activities. Children would benefit from learning about children's rights in real-life and relevant contexts.
- Children's wellbeing is supported appropriately through a range of interventions, including effective nurturing approaches supported by PEF. Staff provide identified groups of children with experiences to develop social skills and improve confidence levels. A few children who are facing additional challenges benefit from partnerships to improve confidence and resilience, for example through drama. A few children benefit from 'nature nurture' learning outdoors. This is helping to support their social and emotional wellbeing. Staff need now to monitor the impact of these approaches and interventions to support improved outcomes for identified children, making adaptations as required.
- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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 satisfactory. The majority of children across the school have achieved, or are on track to achieve, expected levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Overall, a minority of children are capable of making greater progress.
- The majority of children with additional support needs are making satisfactory progress towards individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- The majority of children at early and second level, and a minority of children at first level are making satisfactory progress in all aspects of literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children follow teacher's instructions. The majority enjoy listening to stories and discussing characters in stories. At first level, the majority require more support to listen well to others and take turns when talking in groups. At second level, the majority of children discuss topics in groups and share ideas and opinions. Across the school, children would benefit from more structured approaches to support improved listening and talking skills.

Reading

- The majority of children at early level use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. The majority of children at first level can talk about their favourite author and give reasons for their choice. At first and second levels, the majority of children read aloud with confidence. Children at first and second level would benefit from more opportunities to analyse texts and give their own ideas about the writer's messages and themes.

Writing

- The majority of children at early level write a simple sentence with support. They would benefit from more opportunities to write independently, including through play. At first level, children need to write more regularly across a wider range of contexts. At second level, the majority of children write across a variety of genres for different purposes. Across both first and second levels, children do not yet transfer their writing skills to texts across the curriculum. Children's skills in presentation and handwriting need to improve.

Numeracy and mathematics

- The majority of children at early and second levels are making satisfactory progress with numeracy and mathematics. At first level there are gaps in children's learning. Overall,

children would benefit from revisiting taught concepts to deepen and consolidate their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children order numbers correctly to 20. They add and subtract to 10 with accuracy. At first level, the majority of children add and subtract in multiples of 10 and 100. They need to develop their skills solving two step problems. At second level, the majority of children round whole numbers to the nearest 1,000 and 10,000. They link fractions, decimals and percentages. The majority of children at second level need more practice with division facts.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, children recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes. The majority of children identify and use correctly positional language, such as, in front of, behind and next to. The majority of children at first level identify lines of symmetry and give reasons for their answers. They need to develop their understanding of compass points and three-dimensional objects. At second level, the majority of children identify corresponding alternate and opposite angles and use this knowledge to calculate missing angles.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children sort objects in a variety of different ways. They read and interpret simple graphs and charts. At first level, children should strengthen their understanding of information handling. At second level, the majority of children interpret information from a line graph. They would benefit from developing data handling skills further, including through real-life contexts and using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has recently collated an overview of children's attainment over time in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher needs to work with staff to develop a clear understanding of individual children's attainment over time. It will be important to ensure that information about children's progress is used to identify and address gaps in learning. This will help children to make the best possible progress across the curriculum.
- The headteacher monitors children's attendance and contacts parents when attendance levels fall. A few children have high levels of absence. This is having a negative impact on the progress they make. The headteacher needs to work with families and where appropriate partner agencies to support improved levels of attendance for these children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated in a 'golden book', at assemblies and on wall displays. Children receive 'Star of the Week' certificates for demonstrating the school values. Children attend lunchtime and after school clubs, such as the badminton and Lego club through which children develop skills such as sporting and fine motor skills.
- A minority of children have leadership roles, for example, as digital leaders and through the pupil council. Children are not yet able to talk confidently about the skills they are developing through these roles. Teachers should support children to identify and profile the skills for learning, life and work they are developing through these roles.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a clear understanding of the socioeconomic context of the community and are aware of the challenges facing families. These include the cost of living and access to transport that can limit children's learning experiences. Staff take action to support equity of experience

for children. For example, the school supports recycling of clothing and access to a community foodbank.

- The majority of PEF spending is being used for a nurture intervention for small groups of children. This is having a positive impact on improving children's wellbeing, confidence, and engagement with learning. Going forward the headteacher should develop clear plans outlining how interventions and approaches will be monitored, measured and evaluated. It will be important to demonstrate the impact of interventions on raising attainment for children at most disadvantage.

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.