Summarised inspection findings

Lairg Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

10 March 2020

Key contextual information

Lairg Primary School is situated in the town of Lairg in Highland Council. The roll is 49. The acting headteacher had been in post for five weeks at the time of the inspection.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
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 at Lairg Primary School learn in a positive and inclusive environment. Children across the school are respectful, considerate and polite. They relate positively to each other and work well individually, in pairs and in groups. Across the school, children are enthusiastic about learning and most engage well in class tasks and activities. In the majority of lessons, children experience learning that is differentiated well to meet their needs. This needs to be more consistent across the school to enable all children to make the best possible progress. Children benefit from well-judged support from pupil support assistants.

■ Last session, in collaboration with parents, staff revised the school's values. Children can identify which values make the greatest difference to their experiences at the school. For example, they can describe the benefits from feeling included and the increase in the value placed on their wider achievements. Children, staff and parents should continue to work in partnership to embed further the school's vision, values and aims in all aspects of school life. Recent work on promoting positive mind-sets is supporting children to develop an understanding of the importance of having a resilient attitude. They are beginning to identify how this can help them achieve success in their learning.

■ The majority of children are clear about the purpose of their learning during lessons, and what they need to do to be successful. Most children can identify a few of their strengths and the areas of literacy which they want to improve. They are not yet clear about their overall progress across learning and their next steps in learning. To address this, staff should develop further learning conversations so that these are fully embedded in learning and teaching and key assessment tasks. Children need to have increased ownership and understanding of their personal targets.

■ The recently appointed acting headteacher and staff have made a positive start to improving learning and teaching. Teachers are now making better use of teaching strategies to engage children in their learning. Children respond well to teachers' explanations and instructions. In the majority of lessons, children successfully demonstrate their understanding of key learning points when responding to teachers' questions. Teachers should improve further their questioning techniques to promote children's higher order thinking skills. Together, they should review the balance between teacher-directed and learner-led activities to improve the pace of learning and provide consistently high quality, progressive learning.

- All children regularly access digital technology. Most children use digital tablets effectively to develop their skills in writing, to create digital presentations and to log their achievements. Children are developing their ability to use digital software sufficiently well to organise evidence of their learning and younger children have begun to share this with their parents.

- Across the school, there are a few examples of children planning and leading aspects of learning. For example, they choose elements of topics to individually research and prepare reports. Most children can identify what they already know and what they would like to find out about in new topics. Staff should develop further this way of working to involve children more fully as active participants in planning and leading their learning. A useful starting point will be to involve children in discussing their learning experiences and curriculum topics through the newly formed pupil council.

- Teachers use a range of assessments linked to literacy and numeracy to assess children's progress. These provide information which supports them to plan learning activities. Teachers should use assessment information more effectively to plan learning for higher achieving children to offer appropriate levels of challenge. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the National Benchmarks and are undertaking moderation activities at school and cluster level. This is supporting them to develop a clearer understanding of when children have achieved a Curriculum for Excellence level. Staff should continue to develop further the school's approaches to assessment to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

- Teachers have recently revised their approaches to planning. They now plan learning more collaboratively with each other, which is leading to improved coherence in children's learning experiences across all curricular areas. Teachers should now continue with their plans to develop further their use of the school's unique local context. This will support children to understand better what they are learning and why.

- The acting headteacher and staff track and monitor children's progress at monthly attainment meetings. A range of data is analysed to identify how well children are progressing. This results in teachers adapting planned learning or deploying interventions to support children's progress. Staff should continue to develop a more streamlined approach to gathering data to enable them to track and monitor children's progress more effectively. Teachers need to analyse data more robustly to ensure all children make the best possible progress in their learning.

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

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, children's attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children are making good progress in listening and talking and in reading. Most children are making satisfactory progress in writing. A few children are capable of exceeding age-expected levels of attainment and would benefit from greater challenge in writing. Overall, across the school, children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Literacy and English
Listening and talking
■ Throughout the school, most children listen attentively to each other and their teachers. Children at early level can explain some simple features of good listening. Most are developing confidence in speaking clearly. Through first and second levels, children demonstrate a progressive knowledge of effective skills in listening and talking. This includes an understanding of verbal and body language for presenting to an audience and the importance of respecting the views of others while responding with their own viewpoint. Children at second level develop confidence in speaking to a variety of audiences, for example, to their class and at assemblies.

Reading
■ Children at early level are making good progress in their understanding of sounds and are developing their sight vocabulary and strategies to blend sounds. They talk confidently about their favourite books and explain their reasons with justification. Children at first level add expression well when reading aloud and engage their audience. They can make inferences from what they read. They can find information using the contents and index of non-fiction books. At second level, children read confidently and understand an appropriate level of text. They are confident in discussing how the features of a writer's craft influence enjoyment of a text.

Writing
■ Across the school, children engage sufficiently well with writing tasks. At early level, a majority of children structure sentences using appropriate punctuation. At first and second levels, a majority of children write increasingly extended pieces for a variety of purposes. They are developing their ability to structure their writing appropriately and to engage the reader with creative use of language. A majority of children at first and second levels apply their understanding of letter and word patterns and spelling rules well within their writing. Application of punctuation is less consistent throughout the school. Children across the school would benefit from more opportunities to write in real-life contexts. A few children feel that there is an over emphasis on assessing pieces of writing. They would like more opportunities to write creatively and independently for enjoyment.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ A few children across the school are capable of making better progress in their numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money, measure

■ At early level, children can use a range of resources to count to 10. A few are able to add single digit sums to 10. At first level, children can add and round numbers to three digits. They know the times tables to ten. A few children can find change from a range of items to a value of £5. Most children know the days of the week and months of the year. A minority of children are not confident in estimating measurements using units. At second level, most children work confidently with numbers to 100. A minority of children are less confident in fractions. Most children can tell the time in 12 and 24-hour terminology. Most can convert between minutes and hours.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level a majority of children recognise numbers to ten. At first level, most children can identify two-dimensional shapes and a few three-dimensional objects and the points of a compass. By second level, most children can name a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects, and can name their properties. A few children can use right and straight angles to measure angles.

■ At first level a majority of children can identify a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At second level a majority of children can describe the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Across the school, children's progress is limited in shape, position and movement. Children need to develop their skills further in angles and symmetry.

Information handling

■ Across the school, children's progress have not yet developed their skills sufficiently well in information handling and probability. Children need to develop their skills in gathering and analysing data, presenting data in graphs and charts and in describing the likelihood of events using chance and probability.

Attainment over time

■ The school does not yet have robust data which accurately illustrates children's attainment over time. Children's progress is not tracked and monitored effectively enough to produce data to show how well children are progressing in their learning. Teachers need to continue to gather assessment information which will support them to develop a clearer picture of how well children are attaining over time.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ Children's achievements across a range of contexts are being increasingly valued, recognised and celebrated. Children can identify how they are gaining confidence and a sense of pride when showcasing their achievements in and out of school, in class and at weekly assemblies. A variety of activities allow children to develop further their abilities in, for example, sports, board games and expressive arts. Older children take on roles such as junior road safety officers, house captains/vice captains and buddies. They are developing new skills through their involvement in these activities. For example, helping them to become more confident when speaking in front of others and to learn leadership and citizenship skills. Local partners contribute to children's experiences and achievements. For example, the Active Schools co-ordinator is supporting children and their parents to participate more and lead others in sporting activities. School teams have experienced success in recent local sports competitions

and children are proud of these achievements. Staff have started to track children's participation in clubs and activities within school and in the local community. Tracking of achievement should now be developed further to involve children in identifying the skills and attributes they are developing from these experiences.

Equity for all learners

- The acting headteacher and staff know children and their families well. The school's Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to recruit the services of local authority support officers for numeracy and literacy. These officers provide staff with regular professional learning and work alongside teachers in classes with individual and groups of children. Children who are experiencing barriers to learning are identified through a range of evidence including analysis of a detailed risk matrix. Early indications show that these children are improving their confidence and achievement. Staff now need to use a wider range of diagnostic and formative assessment evidence to measure the impact of interventions in a more robust way.

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.