

Summarised inspection findings

Hilton Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare

The Highland Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Hilton Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare is situated in Inverness, in the Highland Council area. It has 13 classes. The headteacher has been in post for 15 months, following a period of temporary school leadership.

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

- There is a very positive, happy and welcoming ethos in the school. This is evidenced by respectful relationships between all staff and children, and a nurturing and inclusive environment for learning. The school values of honesty, respect, team work, caring and fun are displayed throughout the school and staff and children speak positively of the way they underpin the school's work. Values such as fun, team work and care are evident in the way that staff and children work together to support children's learning and the way that staff collaborate in leading school activities. All staff encourage children to do the very best that they can.
- Most children enjoy learning at school. They behave well, are attentive in class and engage purposefully and enthusiastically in a range of learning activities. This includes them working independently, working with their peers and participating in class discussions. Children are making increasing use of digital technologies to support their learning. Children at P6 and P7 benefit considerably from being able to use personal tablets, in class and at home. This is helping them to engage more regularly in research, improve their spelling, do their homework, and listen to music.
- In P6 and P7, most children are able to talk confidently about their learning. They speak regularly with teachers about their learning during class discussions and have a good understanding of their strengths and the aspects of their learning they need to develop. There is scope for children to engage more regularly in one-to-one discussions with teachers. This will help them to develop more detailed understanding of their specific learning targets.
- Across the school, children benefit from working on tasks that are differentiated to meet their learning needs. For most children, tasks and activities provide an appropriate level of challenge. However, there is scope for a few children to experience increased challenge in their learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Children's learning is supported effectively by their teachers and support assistants in class and in breakout groups. Staff should continue to reflect on their approaches to ensure that all children experience appropriate pace and progression in their learning.
- Children have opportunities to share their views, in class and through school activities such as the pupil council, the Eco Council, and meetings of the football reps. The majority of children say their views are listened to and have influenced practice at times, such as the setting up of

the 'trim trail'. However, they say they would value receiving more consistent feedback from teachers after they have shared their views. Children have some influence on their learning in a few classes, such as selecting the topics which they work on. They enjoy this and would benefit from being able to take more responsibility for their learning in class to further develop their leadership skills.

- The school offers children many opportunities to take part in activities beyond the classroom and timetabled day. For example, they participate in sports activities, gardening, a knitting club, a school choir and a library club. They also take part in activities in the local community, such as J Rock. Children value these opportunities considerably, developing new skills and friendships as a result. There is scope to develop a clearer focus on skills across the school to support more regular dialogue with children around skills for learning, life and work.
- Almost all teachers provide clear instructions to children. They explain the purpose of learning with them and discuss with children how to be successful in their learning. Most teachers also help children to develop a better understanding of their learning through the effective use of verbal feedback. The quality of written feedback is more variable across the school. Teachers use praise appropriately to celebrate children's learning in class. Most teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. There is scope for them to develop their use of questioning further to deepen children's understanding and support their thinking skills.
- All teachers know the children in their classes well and take good account of their needs when planning, delivering and evaluating their learning. Teachers work closely with support staff to ensure that appropriate targeted interventions are provided for individuals and groups of children as required. Senior leaders and staff review these interventions regularly to ensure they result in improved outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders have recently devised an assessment timetable. This outlines clearly the range and timing of assessments which are used across the school. The timetable is helpful for staff and children to let them know how and when information is gathered on children's progress. This information informs a range of school dialogue and decision-making. Plans to share information around assessment with parents and carers are in hand and at an early stage at present. School assessments include standardised assessments linked to literacy and numeracy, self-assessment and peer-assessment activities. Children speak positively about the value of peer assessment. They enjoy learning from one another and say this helps them to develop their confidence. Assessments also include teachers carrying out regular informal checks on children's learning in class, and recently developed key assessment tasks. Ongoing assessment is used effectively by teachers to plan children's learning in an appropriate and responsive way.
- All teachers participate in moderation events, in the school and within the associated school's group (ASG). Almost all staff say these are helping them to become more confident in making sound professional judgements linked to the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Recent activities, linked to the moderation of writing, have helped teachers to develop a more consistent understanding of standards across levels. Staff have also benefited from recent participation in a moderation activity linked to meeting children's additional support needs. Teachers would welcome more regular opportunities to work with colleagues across the ASG to support a clearer, shared understanding of achieving a level.
- The school has recently developed its system for tracking and monitoring children's progress. This system gathers a wide range of data linked to children's attainment and progress. All teachers complete class tracking sheets, which highlight children's attainment at key points in the year. They also complete year-group tracking sheets, which collate children's attainment over time and their progress in working towards and achieving CfE levels. In monitoring and

tracking children's progress more rigorously, staff are also now in the position to be able to identify appropriate interventions to support individual children more effectively to raise their attainment. These interventions, which are discussed and planned carefully by senior leaders and staff, are reviewed regularly. The school's new and developing tracking and monitoring system is helping senior leaders and staff to maintain a better overview of children's progress over time.

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

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 headteacher provided CfE data for the last three years and predictions for the current session in literacy and numeracy. During session 2017-18, almost all children at P1 attained early level in listening and talking; most children attained reading and writing; and the majority of children attained numeracy at early level. The majority of children in P4 attained first level in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy. The majority of children in P7 attained second level in listening and talking and less than half of the children in P7 attained second level in reading, writing and numeracy. All predictions for June 2019 indicate an improving picture across all levels and for both literacy and numeracy. They indicate that the majority of children at P7 will achieve the appropriate level in reading, writing and numeracy and most will do so in listening and talking. Inspection activity supports these predictions.

Literacy and English language

Listening and talking

- Within classes and in focus groups, there is evidence of most children making good progress in developing and applying listening and talking skills across their learning. In almost all classes, children listen well and respond respectfully to each other. At the early level, most children listen to and follow an adult's instructions. They are able to demonstrate their understanding by answering questions, undertaking tasks and explaining their answers. At table tasks, children should develop further their skill in taking turns when engaging in group discussion. At the first level, children are respectful of each other as they eagerly speak audibly and clearly whilst taking turns to contribute to discussion. Staff should develop further children's skills in listening for a particular piece of information rather than responding immediately in a general way. Children would also benefit from understanding literal, inferential and evaluative questions at a simple level. At second level, most children respond well to literal questions and they are familiar with the concept of inference. They should continue to develop their own questioning around inferential and evaluative questions. At this level, children are applying both verbal and non-verbal techniques when engaging in discussion. They are using appropriate vocabulary to suit the purpose of task and type of audience. Across the school, there are opportunities for presentations and short talks, for example, about a country or an invention, but these are not part of a planned progressive programme across the school. Staff should continue to develop opportunities for children to work in pairs and collaborate in groups.

Reading

- Children at all levels are engaging in a range of reading activities which require a variety of skills. They make personal choices of reading material from the school library. There is scope to widen the range of genre and variety of authors accessed, particularly to incorporate the rich literary culture of the Highlands. Across the early level, a range of learning activities and resources provide the children with opportunities to build up their knowledge and use of phonics as a means of building and decoding words. Active play opportunities are incorporated

within a soft start to the day to include reading and writing skills. By P4, children are familiar with the purpose of analysing text in order to have a deeper understanding of it. They can discuss their favourite authors and why they enjoy reading their books. Most children on track to attain first level are gaining confidence in developing a range of strategies to decode words. Whilst these rely heavily on phonics, the children in a focus group all read with fluency, appropriate tone and expression. They can talk about different strategies which they use to aid their reading such as predicting and summarising and would now benefit from explicit teaching of questioning, predicting, clarifying and summarising skills in reading as a whole. They should also further develop the use of context and reading forward or tracking back or forwards to decode tricky words which are not phonetically regular. Children at this level identified the differences between fiction and non-fiction text and could give examples of the organisation of text in a non-fiction book. By P7, most children are making personal choices with regard to their favourite authors and they can explain what they like about the writer's style. Children identify how their knowledge of grammar and specific vocabulary can support the development of their own personal writing, for example, in the use of similes, metaphors and alliteration. They can give examples of these from previous learning. Staff could helpfully revisit higher-order thinking skills and ensure clarity around these alongside subject specific skills within skills for learning, life and work. This would help to enhance children's understanding of text at this level. Children in P6 and P7 are enjoying the opportunity to develop digital literacy skills through the introduction of digital equipment.

Writing

- There is evidence of good writing within jotters and writing samples across the school. Generally, standards of presentation and handwriting are good. Written work in jotters and as displayed on walls demonstrates that most children can include relevant ideas or information and organise and present information logically. Children across all levels have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. Writing tasks are also linked to a focus on technical skills to aid the writing task, for example, using direct and indirect speech. Children at early level are supported to form letters accurately following recommended steps and using a variety of writing tools and materials. They are dictating their stories for scribing, over-writing and under-writing. At first level, children write in a variety of genres, such as letter, poetry and report. They are beginning to extend their use of a range of punctuation to enhance writing. A more consistent approach to developing self and peer-assessment in writing would enable children to take ownership of their own improvements. Children at second level are given choice in relation to the context for writing. They can write at length incorporating scene setting, character development and descriptive language to engage the reader. They are knowledgeable about the ways in which their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary can influence the quality of their own writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The recent focus by staff on using high-quality resources and understanding progression in numeracy is supporting improvements in teachers' knowledge of pedagogy. As a result teachers are planning learning activities that are helping develop children's reasoning skills and understanding of mathematical concepts and processes. Teachers feel that the use of concrete materials and high-quality resources have increased children's motivation for learning in numeracy and mathematics. Across all stages, children demonstrate a good understanding of the value of mathematical knowledge and understanding using real-life examples and contexts. The school's attainment data identifies that most children are on track towards achieving appropriate CfE levels by the end of the school session and evidence from inspection activity would support this prediction.

Number, money, measure

- Across the school, the introduction of concrete resources and activities such as card games are enabling children to develop their mental agility and mathematical thinking skills. At the early level, most children are confident in using appropriate mathematical symbols and language to add two figures up to ten. The majority of children can count in groups of two, five and ten. Children can identify the number of items there are in regular patterns, for example in arrays. They can add coins to pay the correct amount for items up to 10p in value. Children can read analogue and digital clock faces to tell the time in hours up to 12 o' clock. Children at the first level can demonstrate their understanding of the commutative law and place value. They can calculate time differences in hours and a few are able to plan a journey using train timetables. However, they are not always confident in making calculations, particularly in relation to simple fractions. A few children are not confident in using 24-hour notation of time. At the second level, children can explain to others their reasoning for using their chosen strategy for a range of calculations. They can measure the weight and volume of solids and liquids, for example, in a recipe. Most are confident in calculating the perimeter of composite rectilinear shapes. They demonstrate understanding that numbers can be replaced by letters and can use this to solve problems. Children have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to and beyond 1,000,000. They can confidently make a series of different calculations involving money and time, although are slightly less confident in calculating percentages as well as equivalent decimals and fractions. Although children demonstrate good understanding of mathematical processes, they sometimes make simple errors for the sake of providing answers quickly.

Shape, position, movement

- At early level, children are able to correctly use the language of position and direction to describe movement. At first and second levels, children demonstrate good understanding of the qualities of simple 2D shapes and 3D objects. Most children can design their own patterns and symmetrical shapes using one or two lines of symmetry. Children at second level children can use mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles. They can calculate angles in relation to the compass points. They are confident in calculating the perimeter of simple 2D shapes but are less confident in calculating area.

Information handling

- Children at the early level can interpret simple graphs and pictograms to analyse information. Children at first level can construct bar graphs and tally charts with appropriate labelling and using a simple scale, for example to record different pets belonging to children or ice lolly flavours. At second level children have completed pie charts, bar charts and information charts in the context of learning across the curriculum, for example, in social subjects, science or art. Staff should continue with plans to develop opportunities for children to apply their skills in handling and analysing data, including using digital tools to access, analyse and create data in real-life contexts.

Attainment over time

- After a few years where attainment was variable, staff now have a clearer understanding of national standards and are working together effectively to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders are developing a strategic overview of attainment over time so that progress can be more easily tracked across the school. This should be refined further to include the tracking of cohorts and those for whom interventions are now in place. This will help to close any attainment gap and support learners who are not yet making sufficient progress from prior levels. Tracking meetings have been set up to take place three times per year. These meetings focus on predicted levels of attainment, assessment outcomes, interventions required when appropriate, and expected outcomes as a result of the intervention. Teachers are monitoring these interventions and are seeing initial positive impact,

although they have yet to fully evaluate them in relation to children's attainment. Each teacher gathers assessment data which contributes to a year group tracker. This is updated and passed on each year.

- While the school has made progress with the development of more robust moderation procedures to ensure accuracy of professional judgement and the introduction of structured monitoring and tracking procedures, the headteacher recognises there is still further work to be undertaken. There is scope for raising children's attainment further in reading, writing and numeracy. The recent introduction of more rigorous tracking and monitoring alongside the establishment of effective interventions is supporting work to improve attainment. Staff should continue to engage in professional dialogue within the school and with colleagues from other schools to refine further their shared understanding of CfE levels through moderation.

Overall quality of achievements

- Across Hilton Primary School, there is a positive culture of recognising and celebrating children's achievements individually and collectively. Senior pupils speak positively of their success, of which they are proud. Children are benefitting from taking part in a range of out of class activities. Achievements are celebrated and various incentive rewards are presented for success. These include 'Star of the Week', 'Star Writer' as well as recognising the fulfilment of the school values. The school celebrates the achievements of staff as well as pupils. As planned, staff should progress with a more consistent approach to tracking wider achievement to ensure the progression of children's skill development and identify those children who are at risk of missing out. All children have a Learning Journey folder which could helpfully document learning targets and the skills being developed. Following Key Assessment Tasks, children have the opportunity to give pupil voice and identify their next steps.
- A wide range of clubs is available for children across the school, for example, Gardening Club, and these are well-attended and valued by children. There is a variety of opportunities for children to become involved in sport for example, shinty, gymnastics, rugby and swimming. There are a few opportunities for children in P5-7 to learn to play a musical instrument such as guitar, drums and ukulele. Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) supervise timetabled summer and winter activities which are agreed by the Pupil Council. A few children also benefit from leadership opportunities, for example P7 children leading curling and P6 pupils apply for the post of buddy and to undertake a successful interview to secure the position. Performance at local events and for different organisations is a focus for the school choir. These are helping children to develop their confidence and skills in relation to performance, presentation and leadership.

Equity for all learners

- Ensuring equity of opportunity is a priority for staff at Hilton Primary School who have a good awareness of the barriers to children's learning. There is a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school and due to a fairly stable staff profile this knowledge has been built up over a number of years.
- The school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation is being used primarily to focus on health and wellbeing to ensure children are ready to learn. This includes the provision of a Trim Trail, Relax Kids training, breakfast club, football coaching, professional counselling and Water Bottles for All. Through the provision of a nurture room (The Hive) and staff training, the school is making good progress in supporting children's wellbeing. Financial assistance is available to ensure there are no barriers to participation in wider achievement opportunities.
- PEF is also supporting a homework club and an after school club which primarily targets children requiring support with spelling and reading. This is helping to ensure all learners are

appropriately equipped for the next steps in the class. Teachers feel that the provision of high-quality resources to support learning in numeracy and maths, along with intensive support from PSAs in numeracy and literacy, are having a positive impact on improving children's learning. A few initiatives to support family engagement are promoted within the school, for example, the Forest School initiative and baking sessions.

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.