

Summarised inspection findings

Inveraray Primary School

Argyll and Bute Council

30 October 2018

Key contextual information

Inveraray Primary School and Nursery Class is the furthest north school in the Mid Argyll area and serves the town of Inveraray and surrounding area. Children generally transfer to Lochgilphead Secondary School. The school roll is currently 64 with a further 12 children registered in the Pre-five unit which is managed by the headteacher. There are four classes, one of which is known as an 'early level' class as it comprises the children from P1 and all the children registered in the Pre-five unit. This session the staff team is complete following a period on staff shortages. The headteacher leads and manages both Inveraray Primary School and Dalmally Primary School. The school has experienced some challenges in recent years with regard to having a full complement of teaching staff.

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 are weaknesses in the strategic leadership of the school, particularly in relation to the pace of change. The headteacher has involved all relevant stakeholders, including children in an extended consultation exercise to refresh the school's vision, values and aims. Finalising and sharing the school's revised vision, values and aims statement for the school has been affected by changes in staffing and by staffing shortages in session 2017/18. At the time of inspection the vision, values and aims statements were due to be shared with all stakeholders for comment. In taking forward the revised vision, we have discussed with the headteacher the importance of fully embedding the vision in everyday practice in learning and teaching. It is intended that the vision, values and aims will align with the school's curriculum framework which is also subject to revision. The headteacher and her staff recognise the need to create a curriculum rationale that reflects the rich culture and heritage of the school's environment and community. We have discussed with the headteacher, how as a matter of importance the school's arrangements for sharing confidential information need to be reviewed. It is now time for the school to reflect on what it can achieve together, by building on examples of positive practice to bring about consistency in teaching and learning. There is a need to significantly review the approaches employed by the school to support children with barriers to their learning, particularly those at the middle stages of the school.
- Teaching staff have taken on important leadership roles which are linked to identified areas for improvement in the school's improvement plan. These include a focus on science, nurturing approaches and strategies to improve children's reading skills. As well as taking on additional leadership roles, some staff including support staff engage with research to improve curriculum programmes, to adopt play-based pedagogy and nurturing approaches across the school. We have asked the school to reflect on the value of initiatives which regularly involve extracting children from class and to consider the impact this may have on children who are missing out on learning in other areas of the curriculum. The staff team are using a more collaborative

approach to planning the curriculum, learning and teaching. Regular opportunities are provided for staff to come together to build their professional confidence through joint training, and sharing of their ideas and skills. Working in this way is helping them plan curriculum activities which are intended to build on children's knowledge, skills and attributes. Teachers are increasingly planning learning opportunities which allow children to apply their skills in other curriculum areas.

- The school's approaches for formally monitoring and evaluating are not yet effective enough. Evaluative activity such as monitoring teachers' plans, children's work and observations of the quality of teaching and learning, happens too infrequently. The headteacher recognises that she now needs to strengthen her approaches for formally monitoring the quality of educational provision. We have suggested implementing a programme that is systematic and focused on providing all children with the highest quality of teaching and learning.
- Children are involved in a range of relevant leadership activities. Children and those who are members of the Pupil Council value these opportunities and enjoy being able to influence aspects of the work of the school. For example, their intergenerational work which is helping them understand their role as responsible citizens. Children have a range of responsibilities which include involvement in various committees. Currently the Eco Committee is working on a submission for the school's next Green Flag award through the Eco-Schools Scotland scheme. Children are also members of the Digital Leaders Council, they buddy younger children and they benefit in terms of their confidence, from having leadership roles and responsibilities as 'tribe' members with their 'House' system.
- Parents we met with and who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire appreciate the small class sizes and the opportunities for children to experience learning outdoors. However, parents also raised with us some significant areas of concern. These include the school's approaches for dealing with and supporting children who display challenging behaviour, the effectiveness of systems for communicating and engaging with parents, and transparency in dealing with their concerns. Parents would like to see the school offer a range of after school activity programmes throughout the year.
- The school has made use of its allocation of Pupil Equity Fund to support children's social and emotional wellbeing. We have asked the school to monitor the effectiveness of the interventions which have recently been introduced to help children who have been identified as at risk of missing out. These interventions are linked to the school's raising attainment strategy. The school is aware of the social economic context of the school. The headteacher recognises the school's SIMD data does not accurately reflect the socio-economic challenges which affect the school and its community.

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

Learning and engagement

- The majority of children engage very well and they are keen to learn. Most children show tolerance and respect for their peers. We observed some very positive interactions during lessons, between children and their teachers and support staff. A focus on nurturing approaches is beginning to help those children who find learning and interactions with others challenging develop their skills in self-regulation. However, at times, we observed a significant minority of children disturbing learning with low level and occasionally very disruptive behaviours.
- Across the school, during whole class and group activities, most children can complete set tasks independently. Around a fifth of children on the school roll, receive targeted support to help them complete their tasks. Too often children receive this support in areas of the school out with their own classroom. To ensure that children are motivated to engage in their learning, teaching and support staff would benefit from having clearer strategic direction on the most appropriate teaching approaches to use. Relevant professional learning would help staff to improve their range of strategies for supporting children's learning during whole class and small group activities.
- In overly formal teacher directed lessons, a few children did not engage very well, they lacked motivation and a few children found it difficult to follow the instructions. This resulted in work that was either unfinished or of a poor quality. In the best examples of teaching, children focus well on tasks, they work conscientiously and when given exciting and motivating contexts for learning, they can work independently, and in small groups. Children would benefit from having a greater say in what and how they learn.
- Children in P4 to P7 have had opportunities to take part in learning conversations with their teachers, to talk about what they have been learning. We ask that children now have greater support from teachers, to encourage confidence in articulating what it is they need to do to improve specific aspects of their learning. Children have had some limited experience of setting learning targets in literacy and numeracy. In order to raise children's aspirations of themselves as learners, they should be engaged regularly in setting realistic, time contained targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Quality of teaching

- Teachers explanations were generally clear, and in the majority of lessons interventions were relevant and helped children understand what was expected of them. There is scope for teachers to plan lessons that offer children more opportunities to be independent learners. There is a need to use digital technology in a more consistent way to support children's

learning. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. In too many lessons, teachers' lengthy lesson introductions detracted from the overall focus of the learning, resulting in some children becoming restless and less motivated to engage with the tasks.

- In the best lessons, differentiation was evident in the range of activities provided for children and the pace of learning was brisk. We have asked teachers to consider the amount of time children sit listening to instructions and responding to closed questions which do not extend children's thinking. The use of praise needs to be reviewed, to ensure that children recognise the worth of applying themselves fully to the task or activity. At times, children are praised for work that is not of the highest standard.
- Teachers are increasingly aware of the importance of the cycle of planning, teaching, assessing and recording children's progress and how this helps to raise children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

Effective use of assessment

- The school gathers a range of data which is then used by teachers and senior staff to plan future learning. The range of data that the school gathers now needs to be used more effectively to raise attainment and improve the consistency of children's learning experiences, specifically in the middle and upper stages classes. We have suggested that teachers need to make better use of the knowledge they have of children when planning appropriate learning.
- Assessment information helps staff to identify children who require additional support with their learning. Children receive sensitive pastoral care from staff.

Planning, tracking and monitoring

- Teachers plan across all areas of the curriculum. They have worked with their cluster colleagues to develop a moderated set of learning intentions and success criteria for key areas of the curriculum. Following this cluster initiative teachers then focussed on moderating the standard of writing across the school. By working in this way teachers are making more informed judgements of how well children are progressing in their learning and achieving a level. Teachers discuss the skills they wish children to gain and the types of knowledge children will need to become successful learners. Teachers track children's progress in learning across Curriculum for Excellence electronically. This data is then used alongside SIMD data and summative and formative data to plan next steps in children's learning. These arrangements have not yet had the greatest impact on providing a consistently high learning experience for all children.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school has developed a clear curriculum statement and a rationale for the re-introduction of an 'early level' class. The rationale for the 'early level' class has been carefully crafted and now needs time to be embedded, but also reviewed as intended to evaluate the impact of the 'early level' class. Curriculum pathways exist for all areas of the curriculum and at present the headteacher and her staff are exploring how best to include the teaching of science across the school. The merits of having science and other STEM subjects as discrete subjects are being considered alongside an approach that would see science incorporated into interdisciplinary learning themes. The school has close connections with a wide range of local partners, voluntary organisations, local community groups and parents who support the delivery of the curriculum. The extensive school grounds and adjacent woodland, pond, and beach are all used at times throughout the year to support taking the curriculum and learning outdoors. There is scope to capitalise fully on the richness of the local environment when refreshing learning pathways. More recently, the school has placed a stronger emphasis on helping children to make links with their learning and the world of work.
- We have suggested that following the revision of the school's vision that any revision of curriculum pathways involves parents and children meaningfully in designing a unique curriculum framework. Parents we spoke to were of the view that they were not fully aware of the school's revised vision, values and aims. Children are involved in recording their curriculum experiences on the 'curriculum tree'. In this way a visual record of their curriculum journey is retained. We have discussed with the school how they might adjust their curriculum rationale to take account of the needs of children who find it difficult to access the curriculum as a result of social, emotional and health related issues.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Overall, parents who responded to inspection questionnaires are happy with the early learning and childcare provision. Positive partnerships with parents and carers are evident through the range of ways parents can engage in their child's experiences including weekly book club sessions that are open to the wider community. Practitioners offer on-going support to parents informally and clearly have well established, positive relationships with them. Helpful suggestions, linked to local authority developmental milestones, are made to parents to support learning at home. There is scope for engagement with a wider range of partners to support and motivate learning across the early level in a planned way. Parental engagement has been identified as a priority for improvement and planned developments such as stay and play sessions should build on the existing positive relationships.
- Most parents (85%) who responded to inspection questionnaires feel that the school helps their child to feel confident. Parents feel that staff are approachable, friendly and care about their children. Most parents feel that their child is known as an individual. Where required, most parents (77%) feel comfortable to approach the school with questions, suggestions and any problems.
- The school has many close links with the local community. A range of partners regularly contribute to learners' experiences. This includes opportunities to participate and work in partnership with local businesses, community groups, intergenerational learning and local celebratory events. Children report these experiences have a positive impact on their confidence and partners report that they have very positive relationships with the school. The impact of participation in the range of experiences has on children now needs to be tracked systematically in order to measure value added. This should include tracking skills being developed for learning, work and life.
- Use is made of social media to share events and celebrate successes of learners in the school. Although information can also be supplied to parents in different formats, a minority of parents would like increased information and communication with the school and for this to be provided in a more timeous manner. The school uses an online package to record and share learning. This allows parents to engage with aspects of their child's learning at home. However, a third of parents who responded to inspection questionnaires would like more information on how to support learning at home. The school has correctly identified a need to involve parents more in their child's learning and have plans to take this forward including a family learning workshop planned to support emergent literacy.

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

weak

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

Wellbeing

- The school's core values of enjoyment, respect, creativity, perseverance and working together have recently been created with input from children, a representative group of parents, teachers and support staff. As yet the core values are not fully embedded in school life or practiced by all learners.
- The staff team are committed to supporting children develop healthy attitudes that will help them enjoy learning and engage positively with each other. Teaching and support staff work well together, they share practice and use their collective skills to think about the best way to support children's wellbeing.
- The school grounds are extensive and varied and the school is in close proximity to the beach. Children often learn outdoors and take part in 'beach' and 'forest' school activities. We can see that these opportunities are having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing outcomes for most children. However, it is clear that more must be done to ensure all children, including those with known barriers to their learning, benefit from regular opportunities for learning outdoors. We have asked the school to review and refresh protocols for supporting children who present challenging behaviour and make sure that all staff are familiar with additional support for learning policy and guidance.
- Children we spoke to talked positively about their school. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, around one quarter said they enjoyed school all of the time. The majority (73%) of children recorded that they felt safe and most (78%) of them felt that staff treated them with respect and fairness. Children are proud of their achievements as an Eco school, they recognise the importance of taking care of their extensive garden where they grow vegetables and make their own compost as part of their environmental education programme. They are using a new resource which involves taking part in activities which develop positive attitudes to their work. This is a relatively recent intervention and staff have yet to evaluate the impact of this work on children's learning.
- Parents we spoke to were positive about how the school takes care of their children. They appreciate the level of pastoral support the school offers and in the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all (89%) say their child likes being at school. They were concerned though about the advice the school provides with regard to helping their child learn at home. The headteacher is aware of these concerns and has included in the school improvement plan a review of the homework policy.

- Staff have recently refreshed their knowledge of the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) guidance. It was felt necessary to revisit the GIRFEC advice to ensure that all staff were fully equipped with the knowledge and skills to support the wellbeing needs of all children. Teachers when planning curricular activities make reference to the indicators which aspire to keep children safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, respected, responsible and included. There is more to do however, across the school to ensure that all children are consistently having all of their social and emotional and wellbeing needs met. Whilst relationships between children and staff were generally respectful, this was not consistently the case between all children. Children would benefit from having a stronger say in how they could work towards a whole school approach to promoting respectful relationships.

Statutory duties

- The school provided us with information on how they identify and plan for children who need additional help with their learning. Child's plans are created and monitored regularly by the headteacher and relevant members of teaching staff in partnership with supporting agencies. Not all children who experience barriers in their learning have a child's plan or an agreed programme of interventions in place to support their learning. As a matter of urgency, the school must work with parents and relevant agencies to devise individualised education plans and to ensure children at all stages who would benefit from a Child's Plan have one in place.

Inclusion and equality

- The headteacher and staff have used the funds allocated to the school from the Pupil Equity Fund on initiatives and interventions which focus on building resilience and increased self-esteem in children. Through science related and community based activities the school can evidence improved confidence and self-belief in some children, though this is not yet consistently making a difference for all children. Teachers provide interventions which involve children regularly being extracted from class and so they are missing out on activities taking place in their classroom. Some children are beginning to benefit from these interventions; for example, having a better awareness and confidence in themselves and increasingly being able to self-regulate their behaviour. We have asked the school to evaluate the impact of multiple transitions for children throughout the day and over the week.

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, most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. A few children at each level are making good progress.
- The attainment data that the school provided was based on the school roll at the end of session 2017/18 which showed that children's attainment in literacy and numeracy was good. However, the school needs to improve further its moderation activities to improve staff's confidence and consistency in determining if children have achieved a level. The school's own predictions for the current P4 and P7 roll show that children's attainment levels in writing will dip slightly. The school improvement plan outlines a specific focus on improving children's emergent writing and early numeracy.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, the majority of children can listen well and respond to each other in a respectful and polite manner. A few children working within first and second level, still find it challenging to take turns to speak during group and class discussions. The majority of children are aware of their audience when speaking, and most can convey their message clearly. There are a few children who would benefit from interventions which would encourage them to make eye contact when speaking and to articulate their words slowly and clearly. A few children are inattentive and do not pay close attention to instructions or explanations.
- Children have opportunities to share their own personal stories which a few do with enthusiasm. Teachers read novels to children and the majority can listen and respond to questions about the context, main ideas and key characters. The majority of children working in first level can talk about the benefits of developing a positive attitude to thinking and debate the issues associated with adopting a closed attitude to solving problems. Most children working in second level, can identify through small group discussions the skills required for effective teamwork.

Reading

- At the early level, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills. The majority of children working at the 'early level' most can read simple texts independently, but they lack fluency and expression when reading aloud. The majority can use their knowledge of phonics to decode unfamiliar words. They can sequence stories in their reading book and pick out the main ideas and principal characters. The majority of children working in first level can read aloud from a familiar text but a few had difficulty explaining who the main characters were and why they were important to the storyline. Children need more opportunities to talk about their texts and to gain confidence in responding to open-ended

questions. Most children working at second level, can read and extract information from various sources to create a poster about the personal characteristics needed for a positive mind-set.

- Across the school, children can access the school library which offers a range of fiction and non-fiction books and topic books including a selection of Scottish themed books. Children at first level were unable to share with any confidence who their favourite author was and found it hard to justify why they enjoyed their books. Children working at second level would benefit from more frequent opportunities to analyse text as part of a reading lesson.

Writing

- Across the school, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress. At the early level the majority of children can have a go at writing simple sentences or having their imaginary stories and real life accounts scribed for them. At first level, the majority of children can create a short personal account using appropriate punctuation, such as a full stop and capital letter, question mark and explanation mark. They are beginning to make their sentences more interesting by adding adjectives. By second level, most children's writing conveys information related to the particular genre. Children at first and second level can write for a variety of purpose, but they have insufficient opportunities to do so.
- Across the school, the presentation in jotters needs to be of a higher standard. Children have too few opportunities to write a length or to redraft their written work. Children are not routinely setting targets for their writing.
- Assessments of a few children's written work at the early level and first level were not accurate. A more rigorous application of the standard is needed to ensure consistency of achieving a level across the school. Children would benefit from appropriate feedback on their writing.

Mathematics and numeracy

Number, money, and measurement

- Across the school, children's attainment in numeracy is good.
- Children working at the 'early level' can with some support count to 100 by counting in two's. They are familiar with even and odd numbers and they can accurately identify the number before and after within twenty. They can partition numbers into groups of two, three and four with accuracy but were less successful at partitioning beyond six using concrete materials. Children working in first level were gaining confidence with place value to hundreds. The majority of children operating in first level can accurately complete adding and subtracting computations using hundreds tens and units. Most were accurate in multiplying by 2, 3 and 4 but less accurate when dividing by 4. They can correctly identify the names of coins and their value. Children now need to apply their number skills in other contexts and this would include more opportunities to handle real money in appropriate contexts. By second level, most children have a firm grasp of place value. Most are confident when multiplying and dividing, and they can add, subtract and order decimals. The majority can successfully convert simple fractions to percentages.

Shape position and movement

- At the first level, the majority of children could correctly identify and name 2 dimensional shapes. They were less confident at naming and knowing the properties of 3 dimensional shapes.

Information handling.

- Children at early and first level, can with some support create bar charts, they use tally marks to record data. A few can interpret the data presented in bar charts. Children now need to generate their own data from real life examples and be given opportunities to make decisions about the best way to present the data.

Attainment over time

- The school has established a system to track and monitor children's progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels. The recent moderation work with cluster schools is beginning to help teachers to develop a shared understanding of Curriculum for Excellence levels. The headteacher now needs to take action to ensure that the data gathered over time from formative and summative assessments, along with teachers' professional judgement is used effectively to plan consistently challenging, relevant and high quality learning experiences for children. There needs to be a stronger focus on raising attainment for all children in order to close the poverty related attainment gap

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children experience a variety of opportunities in school which are helping them develop confidence, raise their self-esteem and awareness of the needs of others. The majority of children respond very well to these opportunities. As House Captains and buddies, children behave responsibly and rise to the challenges placed upon them as mentors for younger children. The school provides some out of school clubs and activities which are offered at set periods of time in the school year. Parents and children wanted a wider range of after school clubs across the school year. Currently children benefit from taking part in biannual events such as the trip to Alloway as part of the school's focus on the life and work of Robert Burns. Children take part annually in a Burns recitation competition. Children contribute to the Neil Munro writing competition, they attend the Gaelic choir, take part in dramatic theatre, regular beach cleaning events and the Mid Argyll music festival. In school, children enter a potato growing competition and they offer a gardening service to residents of the nearby, Chalmers Court. The school does not yet track children's wider achievements, or participation in activities out with school.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff know their families and children well. They have identified children who may be affected by socio-economic disadvantage and consulted with staff when considering the best use of their allocation of the Pupil Equity Fund. As already mentioned, the school should now review its approaches for extracting children to ensure equity and to avoid children missing out on the full range of curriculum and learning opportunities on offer within their classrooms. The school has not yet put in place systems to evaluate the impact of recently introduced nurture, science or expressive arts related interventions that are funded through the school's Pupil Equity Fund. The focus of these interventions is on supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing.

Choice of QI : 2.6 Transitions

- Arrangements to support learners and their families
 - Collaborative planning
 - Continuity and progression in learning
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- Transitions into what children refer to as, the 'Big Class' or 'early level' class are well planned to ensure children and families are appropriately supported. Home visits have been used successfully to support the early building of positive relationships and attachments. As part of the transition process, parents are encouraged to share information about their child's care and learning needs. This now needs to be more robust to ensure that a coherent and holistic picture is created that allows needs to be addressed as quickly and effectively as possible. Creating a more robust system will also support the effective building on prior learning that better supports continuity and progression. A few children attend the setting as part of a split placement. There is scope to build on arrangements to share information to ensure continuity in learning and care is provided across settings. The 'early level' class which is made up of children from the Pre-five Unit and from P1, regularly take part in whole school activities and events. As a result, they are comfortable within the school environment.
 - The 'early level' class supports transition well with children's learning journey continuing in the same environment and with key members of staff as children move onto primary one. It will be important to continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the early level class on transitions at this important stage. As the school provides early learning and childcare for the local area' some children move onto other primary schools. Local authority documentation, including literacy and numeracy trackers and developmental milestone trackers, provide a consistent approach to sharing children's progress.
 - As children move through stages, information is passed between teaching staff to promote continuity and progression in learning. The number of transitions children, particularly those with barriers to their learning, experience across the school day and week need to be considered. Wherever possible these should be minimised to ensure continuity of learning experience.
 - There are well established arrangements in place to support transition from P7 into S1. Guidance staff meet with school staff early in the year to identify children who may potentially benefit from an extended transition programme which is then planned and delivered. Pastoral information is shared prior to transition visit days in the summer term. A transition project based on French begins in primary and is completed early in S1. Overviews of progress in literacy and numeracy are provided. Work is ongoing to ensure academic transitions are as strong as pastoral transitions.

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.