

# Summarised inspection findings

**South Lodge Primary School**

The Highland Council

27 November 2018

## Key contextual information

South Lodge Primary School is situated in Invergordon in the mid area of The Highland Council. The school has a headteacher and a principal teacher. The headteacher has been in post for two years. There are 161 children in the school. There are 29 children in the nursery. There are seven classes within the school.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

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

- The headteacher and staff have created a welcoming and nurturing environment across the school. Parents and partners have commented on the positive difference the headteacher has made to the ethos of the school since he joined the staff team. Staff know the children and families well and have an understanding of the social, economic, and cultural context.
- The school has recently reviewed its vision and values. Commendably staff, children, and parents have been involved and consulted with when creating the vision and values. The headteacher is aware of the need to continue to review and develop them. This should be done in consultation with parents, children, staff, and wider stakeholders. A clear set of aims can now be considered to take the school forward as part of this consultation. The school holds regular assemblies to reinforce the values. Children are familiar with the values and can discuss them appropriately when talking about the school.
- The headteacher and staff are committed to doing the best they can for all children. Staff regularly meet together informally at the end of the school day at 'get together time'. Staff report that this is a great support to them.
- The headteacher, supported by the staff including the principal teacher, has focused on creating a supportive ethos across the school. The headteacher and staff must now build on the positive ethos developed to create and sustain an aspirational vision and raise attainment for all children.
- The headteacher has correctly identified the need to carry out more rigorous self-evaluation and further timeous scrutiny of all data available to inform the next steps in the school's improvement journey. The headteacher has involved the staff in self-evaluation and staff report they are keen to take part. The headteacher and staff would benefit from developing further their understanding of national good practice and use this information when discussing their own practice.
- The headteacher has carried out professional review and development meetings with the teaching staff and support staff. Within the meetings, areas are identified for staff to work on.

This links to the school improvement plan. There is scope to link in more with the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards and other standards where appropriate.

- The headteacher observes classroom practice and gives feedback to staff with suggestions for improvement. Staff received feedback once last session. The headteacher recognises the need to develop further this process to become more regular and to focus more on the impact of school priorities, inform professional review and development meetings and whole school improvements.
- The majority of teaching staff run after-school clubs ranging from gardening to learning Japanese. Both teaching and support staff give willingly of their time to provide a range of experiences for children. A few staff are taking forward leadership opportunities through leading work on listening, talking, and digital technology. Other staff take the Junior Road Safety Officers and the Eco- schools committee. The headteacher could now build on this to provide high quality leadership opportunities, and continue to encourage staff to develop leadership skills.
- Older children are involved in a range of leadership roles for example, librarians, buddies, pupil council, Eco-schools committee and Junior Road Safety Officers. However, there is scope to develop all children's leadership skills, the roles of children within the groups and create more opportunities for increased responsibility within them. The headteacher engaged positively with the inspection team about different ways of developing children's leadership skills.
- The school has received money from the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). The headteacher has used the money to buy in additional support staff time and new resources. The headteacher and staff must ensure that support staff time and the resources are supporting children in a targeted and appropriate way and that the activities impact on the targeted groups of children specifically.
- The headteacher is aware of the needs of the different cohorts of children. There is now a requirement to collect accurate data to inform thinking and decisions made about children's progress. The data does not inform well enough gaps between different groups and cohorts of children. Currently this information does not fully support learning, teaching and assessment approaches to ensure all children are making appropriate progress.

## 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 are polite and well mannered. Staff have developed positive relationships with children and children are supportive of one another.
- In the majority of lessons, children are not sufficiently challenged and the pace of learning is too slow. The examples of best practice can be shared across the staff. Staff collegiate time must now focus on developing a shared understanding of high quality learning and teaching, progression and national standards.
- A few lessons are well paced and match the learning needs of most children who respond positively, taking part with enthusiasm. In the majority of classes, learning is slow to start and time is not used to maximum effect. The school urgently needs to review how staff utilise time during lessons. For example, learning and teaching should start immediately. The school should ensure valuable teaching time is not eroded at any point during the lesson.
- In a few lessons, cooperative learning routines are incorporated into practice, which enhances the learning experience and allows key skills to be transferred to other curricular areas. There is an emphasis on teacher led learning with limited opportunities for children to lead learning or become actively involved. Staff recognise the need to involve children in a more engaging approach and are able to articulate plans to allow this to happen. This can be shared across the school to ensure that children are encouraged to take the lead in learning.
- In a few lessons, children are encouraged to offer challenge to one another and tasks are self-differentiated. However, in almost all lessons there is a lack of differentiation. Effective approaches to differentiation should now be explored and implemented across the school. This will help ensure a clear focus on matching the learning to pupils' needs.
- Digital technology is not yet used to its full potential within the classroom. Across the school, more opportunities can now be created to develop children's skills in this area. The school has registered for the Digital Schools Programme. Along with the new resources coming to the school, this has the potential to support the embedding of digital literacy in learning and teaching. Staff should look for further opportunities to use the interactive whiteboard to support and enhance learning and teaching.
- In the majority of lessons, instructions given to children are clear and concise with learning intentions matched to the desired outcome. However, in the majority of classes, questioning is more limited and does not allow children to develop these skills. There is a need across the school to develop consistency in the use of clear and well-matched learning intentions and success criteria and ensure these reflect the intended learning and assessment. In a few classes, peer and self-assessment are used to evaluate learning. A greater consistency in both

written and oral feedback will ensure children are clear about their strengths and can discuss their next steps in learning. The school should now focus on developing formative assessment further and include the development of higher order thinking skills. All staff are very receptive to the suggestions for improvement discussed by the inspection team.

- Assessment is not yet integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Staff now need to develop a clear understanding of the principles of assessment and ensure these underpin all learning and teaching. The staff are aware of the need to provide planned opportunities for children to demonstrate breadth, challenge and application of skills in new and unfamiliar situations. Assessment information is gathered in each class. However, the impact of this assessment information is limited.
- Staff have worked with colleagues across the Associated Schools Group (ASG) to moderate standards in listening and talking. This work now needs to be expanded to include reading, writing, and numeracy within the school to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of national expected standards and progression.
- The staff have correctly identified the need to review current approaches to planning and have been receptive to ways in which planning could focus specifically on what is being taught, assessment and evaluations. This has the potential to streamline and make planning more effective.
- The headteacher has recognised the need to develop further current tracking systems to ensure key cohorts of children including those with additional support needs are tracked effectively across the curriculum. This will help to identify where support can be allocated to have the greatest impact. This includes the need for more robust and focused termly tracking meetings focusing more on support and challenge and clear next steps.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school has a curriculum rationale, which is shared with another school. The school is aware of the need to revisit the curriculum rationale. This can now be aligned with the new vision and values of South Lodge Primary and be more reflective of the unique setting of the school. The school is well placed to involve parents, children, and the wider community to develop their new curriculum rationale.
- The headteacher is aware of the need to ensure that all curriculum areas are covered on a regular basis. The headteacher is planning to include this as part of his monitoring procedures.
- The school has developed pop up topics, which are based on the interests of children, and world events that the children are intrigued about. The headteacher is aware of the need to review the concept of pop up topics and ensure that they are planned for appropriately. These topics need to be planned for as part of the curriculum. They should be based on and planned for using the experiences and outcomes. They may also provide an opportunity for children to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar contexts.
- Across all classes, more use should be made of The Highland progression frameworks in all subjects to support teachers in ensuring that children are progressing and developing skills in different areas of the curriculum.
- The school is at an early stage in developing a shared understanding of interdisciplinary learning. Staff would benefit from engaging in professional learning opportunities that support them in planning high quality interdisciplinary learning experiences that take full consideration of Curriculum for Excellence guidance.
- There are a few examples of children being given the opportunity to take their learning outdoors. There is scope for staff to use the outdoor areas more frequently to develop children's learning. The staff may benefit from researching good practice and using this to enhance outdoor learning appropriately.
- Children are not receiving two hours of quality physical education each week.
- There are some examples of staff providing opportunities to develop skills for learning, life, and work. For example, children write applications for a variety of roles in school, such as librarian. Staff should continue to familiarise themselves with the Careers Education Standard and use this to support the development of this work. The headteacher and staff are well placed to continue to develop partnerships with local businesses to provide more relevant and meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the world of work.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The Parent Council is supportive of the school. Its members focus primarily on fundraising for the whole school and are very successful in this. The Parent Council pays for the leavers' party and supports children to go on residential trips. The Parent Council is keen to widen its involvement in school improvement and the headteacher is very receptive to ideas of how this can be achieved.
- The headteacher has implemented many different methods of communication with the wider parent body, and many of these are received well. The headteacher, along with the Parent Council, could now survey parents to see which methods of communication are most effective and continue to develop these.
- The headteacher is keen to involve parents in the life of the school and will continue to develop opportunities to increase parental involvement in 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 Highland Council that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.



### 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

- The headteacher and the staff at South Lodge Primary have an understanding of the school's context, including factors that might affect children's learning and progress. There is clear commitment from all staff and the headteacher to build a positive and caring ethos. Children benefit from positive relationships with staff and each other.
- Most children state that they feel safe at school and that the school helps them to feel safe. Most feel that the staff treat them fairly and with respect and the majority of children think that other children treat them with respect. When talking to the children they told us they are happy and could identify a member of staff that they would speak to if they have concerns.
- The majority of children are aware of how to stay safe online and are able to describe what a healthy diet is and how to stay fit. Most children do not yet have an awareness of other important issues such as alcohol and substance misuse. The school would benefit from reviewing its health and wellbeing programme. This has the potential to ensure a progressive and appropriate programme taking account of the needs of the children and the context of the school. In addition, there should be robust approaches to tracking and monitoring health and wellbeing to enable the school to demonstrate progress, identify if it is improving outcomes for children and to develop further the identification of children who require support.
- The staff are aware of the wellbeing indicators. The headteacher has correctly identified the need for children to be more familiar with the wellbeing indicators to help to determine where further support work might be required.
- There are appropriate processes in place to identify children who may require additional support needs. Annual meetings with parents further support this. In these meetings, next steps for child's plans are identified. Parents' and children's comments are recorded appropriately. There is scope to improve children's action plans and individualised education programme targets both short and long term. These would benefit from being more specific, focused and measurable.
- The school has an additional support coordinator, access to a full time support for learning teacher and an inclusion support worker. Meetings are held to discuss each child in the school on a termly basis. Staff complete an initial form to flag up any issues. There is scope for the roles and remits of each member of the support team to be reviewed and clarified. During this review, the team could make it clearer what the process for referrals is and what the expectations of staff within these processes should be.
- At the time of the inspection, the school is in a positive position to provide additional support. However, there is an overreliance by staff on this additional support. Class teachers would

benefit from further training empowering them to be more confident to set appropriate targets and deliver universal and targeted support within their classroom.

- There are a range of interventions provided by the support for learning teacher and the inclusion support worker. Children and staff have talked positively about the interventions provided by them. The school is now well placed to measure the impact of the interventions on different cohorts of children, including children with barriers to learning.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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

#### Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- We agree with the school that overall attainment is weak. The school is aware that its assessment data is not yet robust and there is an overreliance on standardised assessment data. The school has recognised the need to have a wider range of assessment evidence that demonstrates breadth, challenge and application. This wide range of information should be moderated within the school and across the ASG.
- Overall children across the school are not making sufficient progress in literacy and numeracy. The staff are aware of the need to further their engagement with national benchmarks to develop their understanding of standards. This has the potential to lead to improvements in progress and attainment for all children.

#### Literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is weak.

#### Reading

- Overall children's attainment in reading is satisfactory and progress for most children could be improved. Teachers are not currently planning sufficiently challenging reading activities for children. Planning at the correct level of challenge has the potential to improve children's attainment in reading. All children are encouraged to read for pleasure and this is supported by weekly visits to the school library. Reading activities should be further developed to ensure a range of strategies are being taught at early and first level. At the upper stages, teachers must ensure children are presented with reading materials that are age and stage appropriate and provide a suitable level of challenge.
- At early level, the majority of children are able to ask and answer questions to help predict what will happen next within a story. A few children are able to use hear and say blends and sounds made by a combination of letters and apply this when reading. Children are able to retell familiar stories through drawings. At first level, the majority of children are able to read a familiar text with expression and answer questions relating to the text. The majority of children are able to use a variety of strategies to help decode unknown words. Most children are able to answer literal and inferential questions about a text. At second level, the majority of children are able to read with fluency. The majority of children are able to discuss a variety of genres and highlight the style of writing from preferred authors.

## Writing

- Overall attainment and progress across the school in writing is weak. Children in the majority of classes are not making sufficient progress in writing. At all stages, children will benefit from applying their writing skills across all areas of curriculum. Staff are aware of the limitation of writing weekly weekend news. Staff are looking forward to widening and planning for different types of writing. Although handwriting is important, children will benefit from more time spent on the content and composition of writing especially at early level.
- At early level, the majority of children are able to form most lowercase letters correctly and are able to leave a space between words when they are writing. A few can spell familiar words correctly. At first level, children are able to spell common words correctly. A few children are aware of the impact of different sentence openers and connectives and are able to use these in their writing. For most children there is scope to develop their punctuation skills. At second level, the majority of children are able to present information in a logical way. However, there is scope to develop children's use of paragraphs to separate thoughts and ideas. A few children can transfer skills from taught writing to writing across the curriculum in new and unfamiliar contexts.

## Listening and talking

- Across the school, attainment in listening and talking is satisfactory. The recent focus on a skills matrix has had a positive impact on the performance of children within this area with improvements at most stages. There is scope for children to have more high quality opportunities for listening and talking to for a range of purposes to increase attainment further.
- At early level, the majority of children are able to listen to each other and take turns to talk. Children are able to answer questions about a text and predict what might happen in the story. The majority of children are able to identify initial sounds and can recognise and generate rhyming words. At first level, the majority of children are able to demonstrate active listening skills. Children are able to discuss the difference between fact and opinion and ask relevant questions about what they have heard. At second level, children are able to build on the ideas and views of other and ask relevant questions showing respect for the other person's point of view.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall children's attainment and progress in numeracy is weak. Attainment in numeracy at the early level is satisfactory. There needs to be a significant improvement in attainment and progress at the upper stages of the school. This should be addressed as a matter of urgency through robust identification of areas for improvement for individual children and intensive support to improve their basic numeracy skills. Across the school, the staff must improve further their understanding of progression in numeracy and improve the teaching of numeracy and mathematics. Paying particular attention to the development of mental agility and numeracy skills has the potential to raise attainment.

## Number and number processes

- At early level, most children are able to recognise numbers to 20 and the majority can recall the number sequence backwards from 20. The majority are confident at reading analogue clocks times. Most can continue a simple pattern. At first level, the majority of children can round numbers to the nearest 10. A few children are able to use the correct notation for simple fractions. Less than half the children know how many days are in a month and a few children know how many days in a year. At second level a few children can work out simple calculations using the five times table and add tens and units accurately. The majority could use the correct notation for simple fractions and a few children can write a time using 24 hour notation. Across

the school, particularly in the upper school, almost all children would benefit from developing their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division skills. This will support children in other areas of numeracy and support their ability to solve multistep questions. Children also require to develop further their understanding and application of skills in money time and measurement.

### **Shape position and movement**

- At early level, most children can understand the language of position. At first level, less than half the children can name and identify two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. A few children can use mathematical language to describe the properties of a range of objects. At second level a few children can estimate the height of a given object. There is scope for children to improve their understanding of angles including compass points and size of angles.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, the majority of children can use knowledge of colour and shape to match and sort items in a variety of different shapes. At first level, a few children can use mathematical vocabulary appropriately to describe the likelihood of events occurring in everyday situations. At second level, a few children can use the language of probability accurately to describe the likelihood of simple events occurring. The children would benefit from developing further their skills in developing their understanding of using data to predict outcomes of a simple experiment.

### **Attainment over time**

- Overall attainment over time is too variable. Levels of attainment for the majority of children across the school are low. There are no clear trends in data over the last three years. The headteacher now must implement a clear policy for tracking attainment over time, which incorporates all available data. Although the headteacher has a tracking system in place this must be adapted to ensure it is used more effectively. There must be a robust system in place to analyse the data, identify key areas of strength or dips and interventions must be planned and implemented to help children make suitable progress. The headteacher recognises the need for this change and has planned key questions, which will be discussed at each tracking meeting. As this new systematic approach develops and embeds, it has the potential to enable staff to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of children more accurately and identify underachievement at an earlier stage. This will allow interventions to be made as quickly as possible.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- The majority of children are able to interact with peers, staff and visitors with confidence. The Eco Group is promoting responsible citizenship by establishing an Eco code within the school with agreed expectations. Children would benefit from further involvement in the planning of school events building on opportunities created through the Royal Wedding pop up topic.
- Children across the school have the opportunity to take part in after school groups and clubs. Staff have recently developed a system to track wider achievement to ensure those children who are missing valuable opportunities are identified quickly.
- The school celebrates wider achievement at weekly assemblies and within the classroom. In a few classes, class teachers link 'pupil of the week' to the four capacities and ask children to identify strengths in each area.
- Learning profiles have been implemented across the school this session taking the place of previous learning journeys. Children currently set targets for learning in three curricular

areas. Staff must ensure these targets are clear, measurable and link to skills. The targets should be reviewed regularly with learners to allow new targets to be set timeously.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Although staff have demonstrated and articulated an understanding of the socio-economic background of all children, further professional discussion and research would ensure that interventions are appropriately targeted and have a clear rationale. Additional staffing has been funded to improve attainment. These members of staff should have a clear remit around raising attainment and focus entirely on this aim. Initiatives are at an early stage and it is too early to evaluate impact. However, data must be evaluated regularly to ensure the interventions are having the impact on key groups.

## Choice of QI: 2.5 Family learning

- Engaging families in learning
- Early intervention and prevention
- Quality of family learning programme

- The headteacher and staff are committed to improving the learning and achievements of children and families through the development of high quality family learning approaches.
- The school have provided a range of events to encourage parents into the school. These include Decoration Day, torchlight reading event, and Eco-school days. Most of these activities have had a positive response. The school is aware of the need to build on these activities for engaging parents and provide meaningful universal and targeted learning opportunities for families.
- The headteacher is aware of the need provide support and guidance to help develop plans to implement high quality family learning opportunities. These plans would benefit from being informed by local knowledge and research, ensuring families are at the centre of this planning and are active participants in their learning and development.
- The school is well placed to implement its plans utilising the inclusion support worker to provide meaningful family learning opportunities in particular to targeted families.
- Staff use local knowledge to inform their understanding of the local community. They could now consider using the data available to develop further their understanding of community and individual family needs.
- The headteacher is aware of the need to investigate support and opportunities to engage families in learning opportunities. We would encourage the headteacher and staff to form strong collaboration with colleagues with experience of developing family learning drawing on their expertise to support the school in moving forward.
- The school should continue with its consultation with parents but ensure the focus of the consultation is about meaningful ways of helping parents to develop their own skills to support children in their learning.
- The school is aware of the need to reflect further on the recent findings from its homework survey. There is an opportunity to provide interesting and meaningful homework activities, which will support children's learning. This could help to initiate family learning opportunities around the implementation of the new and improved homework activities.

## 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.