

# Summarised inspection findings

**Aberdour Primary School and Early Learning and Childcare Centre**

Fife Council

2 June 2020

## Key contextual information

Aberdour Primary School is situated in the village of Aberdour in Fife. It is a non-denominational school and part of the Inverkeithing High School cluster. 83% of children and families live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) decile 9. At the time of inspection, the school roll comprised 177 children, forming seven classes. A number of these are composite classes. The substantive headteacher is currently on secondment. The acting headteacher took up post in June 2019.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

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 acting headteacher has quickly established positive relationships with the whole school community. She has a clear vision for the school and, working with staff, implements well-judged improvement priorities. As a result, staff have a clear sense of purpose and direction. The acting headteacher is managing the pace of change well. She is supported well by the principal teacher. As a leadership team, they support staff to raise further their expectations of children and what they can achieve.
- The acting headteacher has a renewed focus on the existing school vision and the values of respect, honesty, fairness and kindness. There is clarity for children on how the values relate to their daily lives, both in and out of school. Children talk positively about the difference this is making in their interactions and relationships with their peers.
- All staff work very well together. There is a strong sense of teamwork and effective collaboration as they implement strategies to improve learning and teaching. New members of staff are appreciative of the support they receive from colleagues and senior leaders. There are clear expectations of classroom practice and pedagogy. All staff demonstrate a commitment to professional learning. They are keen to develop further their professional knowledge to improve outcomes for children. Teachers feel empowered to influence and lead learning, as well as whole-school improvements.
- Senior leaders and staff work together well to embed agreed cluster-wide approaches to improving learning and teaching. This is increasing consistency in the quality of learning and teaching across the school and supports a shared language of learning across the cluster. Children talk about the positive impact of this approach and can articulate what they are learning, why they are learning it and how they can be successful.
- There are clear plans in place for improvement. The acting headteacher plans collegiate time appropriately across the year to support improvement and development. Staff's professional learning links well to school improvement priorities. Almost all staff have leadership roles at either school or cluster level. Teachers are developing their understanding of effective improvement planning to ensure a clear focus on improving outcomes for all children.

- The acting headteacher has introduced raising attainment strategies in all classes. Teachers take responsibility for developing appropriate strategies to raise attainment for the children in their class. The acting headteacher discusses these strategies with teachers as part of regular tracking meetings. She supports staff in their use of a range of data to inform planning and next steps. This is having a positive impact on children's progress.
- The recent introduction of a rigorous quality assurance calendar supports regular and ongoing self-evaluation, involving all staff. The acting headteacher has begun to use 'How good is OUR school? (2018)' to increase pupil participation and involve children in evaluating the work of the school. This supports children and staff to have a greater understanding of what is going well and what needs to improve, providing greater clarity around the need for change. As a result, there is an increasing sense of ownership and collective responsibility. She recognises the need to involve children, parents and partners further in evaluating the work of school and in school improvement planning.
- Children have a range of leadership opportunities through the pupil council, the eco and rights respecting school committees, roles as house captains and vice captains, sports leaders, junior road safety officers and as buddies for younger children. They talk positively about the skills this helps them to develop and how these relate to the world of work. The acting headteacher has identified correctly the need to involve all children further in leading learning and improvement across the school.
- Partners are very positive about how the acting headteacher has embraced collaboration and supports joint working. The school has a wide range of partners, all of whom appreciate the pragmatic, solution-focused approach the acting headteacher takes. Staff are encouraged and supported to develop their own professional networks and make links with the local community. This enhances learning experiences and achievement for classes, groups and individual children.
- There are well planned interventions in place to raise attainment and close the school's attainment gap. This includes the effective deployment of staff to provide targeted support for literacy and numeracy. The school receives a relatively small amount of money from the Pupil Equity Fund. This funding has been used to provide training and resources to improve approaches to nurture and wellbeing and to support a focus on conceptual numeracy. There are clear mechanisms in place to review and evaluate the impact of these initiatives and there is already evidence of positive impact on children's progress and attainment. Children feel the conceptual approach to numeracy, supported by refreshed resources, is helping them to take more ownership of their learning and in some cases, lead their learning. Children have more enthusiasm for learning as a result.

## 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

- Aberdour Primary School has a welcoming, friendly ethos. Children are confident, articulate, well-behaved and polite. There are very positive relationships across the school between staff, children and their peers. Almost all children feel safe and indicate that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Aberdour's vision of 'Aspire, Persevere and Succeed' is highly visible throughout the school and regularly referred to by staff and children. The recent focus on the vision and values through the school's house system and pupil of the week awards, supports children to link these to the skills and attributes they are developing through their learning.
- Across the school, children have opportunities to lead their learning. They contribute to planning and how they would like to be assessed as part of interdisciplinary learning (IDL). Children know teachers value their ideas and most feel their views help to shape the learning. Teachers take account of children's life experiences and existing knowledge when planning learning. In most lessons, learning is well planned and matched to meet the needs of most learners. Most children talk confidently about what they are learning and understand the purpose of their learning. In most classes, children are involved in identifying how they will know they are successful in their learning. Most children work well independently, in pairs, and in small groups. A few children would benefit from more focused, differentiated learning to better meet their needs.
- At early level, approaches to learning through play are having a very positive impact on children. Learning experiences are open-ended, promote curiosity and encourage children to lead their own learning. As a result, children are motivated, fully engaged and excited by their learning. Planning is responsive to the interests and needs of children. There is a very good balance between play and directed teaching as part of this approach.
- The use of digital technology is developing well across the school, giving children the opportunity to improve their word processing skills, as well as researching, creating presentations, making increasing use of 'Glow' and developing their skills in coding. Teachers are developing their expertise and seeking creative and innovative ways of using digital technologies to enhance learning across the curriculum. As a result, children are increasingly confident in their use of digital technology for learning.
- Staff make good use of the school grounds and local area for outdoor learning. Children develop and apply their skills at the beach or in the wooded area by the school. Learning experiences include planting, den building, bird watching and growing produce in the vegetable planters. Children speak positively about their outdoor learning. They have opportunities to go into the village and learn about Aberdour and its history. The school has good links with a number of local groups and organisations. This supports children to develop a strong sense of community and to understand the contribution they can make to Aberdour.

- Almost all teachers use the Inverkeithing school cluster's agreed four-part lesson structure. Teachers are well organised and thoughtful in their planning, with most incorporating creativity, as well as personalisation and choice into the learning experiences. All teachers are engaging in a collaborative peer review approach to improving pedagogy. They provide constructive feedback to peers and discuss how to improve practice. Children also provide feedback on the effectiveness of approaches, which teachers use to improve further. Feedback for improvement is a key feature of learning and teaching. In the best examples, children refer to their targets as part of their next learning cycle to support further progress. Staff should continue to share good practice across the school and in all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers plan IDL assessments to evidence children's progress in learning. Staff should develop these assessments further to evidence depth and application of learning across the curriculum and in different contexts. Staff make use of a range of formative and summative assessments, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments. Senior leaders and teachers use assessment data to evidence progress in learning and support dialogue to inform planning further. There is a need for a clearer understanding of progression through Curriculum for Excellence levels, to support teachers' planning of effective assessment. Staff engage with colleagues across the Inverkeithing cluster in moderation activity and learning partnership visits. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop approaches to moderation across and outwith the school, to support a shared understanding of children's progress and achievement.
- The acting headteacher, in discussion with staff, is developing the tracking and monitoring process in school. Teachers are becoming more confident in analysing data and using National Benchmarks, as part of their professional dialogue. The strategy for raising attainment in each class supports discussion, agreement and recording of interventions and additional support for individuals and groups of children. A review of the impact of these interventions is part of the tracking process to ensure they are improving children's progress. As a next step, senior leaders and staff need to have a clearer, shared understanding of how progress through a level is planned and tracked. This will better support their discussions about the pace of learning and appropriate levels of challenge.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The acting headteacher recognises the need to review and update the school's curriculum rationale and design, in partnership with children, parents and staff. This should reflect the recent refresh of the school's vision and values and its strong connection with the local community. The school's contexts for learning should be refreshed as part of this review. Staff need clarity around planned and flexible aspects of the curriculum in order to support a responsive approach to current issues and children's interests.
- Fife Council's learning pathways for literacy and numeracy are embedded in the work of the school. Staff are developing a progression pathway for outdoor learning. There are curricular pathways for all areas of the curriculum. Staff should develop these further to ensure a clear progression of skills and provide opportunities for planned application of learning. A coherent approach to the school's cross-cutting themes of global citizenship, enterprise, sustainability and skills for life and work should be embedded within curriculum plans to ensure relevance and progression of learning. The school uses long, medium and short term planning across all curricular areas. This enables teachers to plan breadth across the experiences and outcomes for children. Planning needs to have a clearer focus on the progression of skills to ensure that the curriculum is more cohesive and builds on prior learning. Teachers should use progression pathways to make connections between learning across the curriculum, to ensure depth, application and relevance of learning.
- All children receive two hours of Physical Education (PE) every week. The PE teacher provides professional learning for class teachers to develop their skills and confidence in delivering high quality PE lessons which build on children's prior learning. Senior leaders should monitor the balance of time allocated to all curriculum areas in each class to ensure children receive their full entitlement to a broad general education.
- The recently introduced health and wellbeing curriculum pathway supports learning across all of the relevant organisers. In recent years, there has been a strong focus on learning about emotional wellbeing. Staff recognise the need to plan effectively for all aspects of the health and wellbeing curriculum to ensure breadth, and children's progressive understanding across the school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents feel that staff know their children well and treat them fairly and with respect. Parents report that staff support children's emotional wellbeing and help them to become more confident. They appreciate the school's open-door policy and feel comfortable approaching the acting headteacher with ideas, concerns or comments. The majority of parents feel their views are sought and listened to. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. There is an active Parent Council. Members discuss school improvement priorities with the acting headteacher. They engage the wider parent body in gathering views and feedback on areas such as homework and communication. The Parent Association supports the school by organising a range of events and fundraising.
- Senior leaders and staff offer a variety of opportunities for parents to engage in their child's learning. They actively seek parental views on how best to provide more information. Children share regularly samples of their work with home to support discussion about learning with their parents and to demonstrate their progress. Staff use digital technology to share learning with parents, with one class piloting the use of Glow to share examples of children's work. Parents value the chance to share their child's learning through class assemblies and open afternoons. Most parents feel the school provides them with ideas about how they can support their child's learning at home. A few parents would like more information about how staff assess their child's progress and more opportunities to learn together with their child.
- Parents provide support for a range of outdoor learning activities as well as educational trips and excursions. There are regular opportunities for parents and wider family members to volunteer and enhance children's learning in school. For example, parents visit school to talk to classes about their jobs and the skills they require, so that children can relate these to their learning.

## 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

good

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

- All staff at Aberdour Primary School know children and their families well. They provide a supportive and nurturing environment for learning, underpinned by the school values and built on positive, respectful relationships across the school. Almost all children indicate they feel safe at school and have someone they can talk to if they have a problem. They know their views are valued and will be acted upon. Staff are responsive to the wellbeing needs of all children. A few children in P7 receive training which enables them to support the wellbeing of others. This is developing their confidence, as well as sophisticated talking and listening skills.
- All staff are committed to promoting children's rights and most children talk confidently about how they are learning to treat each other with respect. Children are well behaved and friendly, with most children demonstrating concern and care for each other. Staff take a restorative approach to encouraging children to resolve and learn from minor conflict in a way which maintains positive relationships. As a result, most children reflect on their words and actions and the impact these can have on others. This supports children to work through minor friendship issues independently. Senior leaders and staff should continue to make connections for children between the school's vision and values, their work on children's rights and the wellbeing indicators.
- Children are developing a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. The majority of children can apply these to their daily experiences. There is a whole school approach to developing emotional wellbeing. This helps children to understand and manage their emotions and supports them in becoming more resilient. There is a need to develop the same confidence and understanding of all of the wellbeing indicators. Staff need to make greater use of the wellbeing indicators to support children to understand their own progress in wellbeing and demonstrate improved outcomes for all children.
- The recently introduced health and wellbeing progression pathway is supporting the breadth of children's learning in health and wellbeing. This results in, for example, most children understanding the importance of healthy eating habits or staying safe online. As a coastal school, children can talk about the importance of staying safe near the water. Staff should continue to ensure that children's learning in health and wellbeing is progressive, and support all children to apply their learning in their daily actions.
- Staff support and encourage children to lead a healthy, active lifestyle. Children develop a good understanding of the importance of physical activity through physical education in school. Almost all children participate in a range of sporting or activity-based clubs, both in and out of school. Staff work closely with the Active Schools coordinator to support this and track participation to ensure no child is at risk of missing out. Children make suggestions for clubs and activities they would like to engage in, and older children run clubs for younger children. This helps them to understand teamwork, build confidence and develop a wide range of skills.

- Staff undertake regular training to ensure they have a good understanding of their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and child protection. They have a clear understanding of the principles of 'Getting it right for every child'. Senior leaders work well with partners to ensure a joined up approach to supporting children and families.
- All staff work well together to ensure that approaches to inclusion and equality support improved outcomes for targeted learners. Approaches to universal support in all classes are having a positive impact on children's ability to access learning successfully. These include the consistent use of visual symbols, the use of digital technology to support literacy and numeracy and increased personalisation and choice.
- Effective systems are in place to identify children who would benefit from additional support. Senior leaders and the support for learning teacher have a clear overview of additional support needs across the school. This supports professional dialogue about the allocation of resources and targeted interventions. Planning for children with barriers to learning is clear, with measurable targets and timescales. Senior leaders and appropriate staff review plans regularly and appropriate next steps are agreed. Parents are involved in this process and staff work closely with home to ensure a shared understanding of actions and expected outcomes.
- The support for learning teacher provides effective advice and guidance to colleagues in order to support children in their learning. She has clear systems in place which demonstrate the progress made by children who receive additional support or targeted interventions. Support staff take a proactive approach to helping children overcome barriers to their learning. They have a leading role in developing nurturing and caring approaches with identified children, as well as universally across the school. This contributes to the caring and inclusive ethos.
- The acting headteacher has introduced a framework for equality and diversity. Children learn about different religions and celebrate the language and cultures of children and families who have moved to Fife from abroad. Children are developing an understanding of the need to challenge discrimination. Senior leaders and staff should build on and develop opportunities to celebrate diversity to reflect the changing nature of families and society. Staff should continue to support children to understand the challenges faced by some of their peers and the importance of equity in providing an inclusive learning environment.

## 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

- Most children come to school with well-developed abilities and a readiness to learn. Most children make good progress in literacy and English language and numeracy and mathematics. A few children make very good progress. A minority of children across the school exceed national expectations. Children who require additional support, who are working towards their own milestones, make appropriate progress from prior levels of learning.

### Literacy and English language

- Across the school, most children achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading and writing, with almost all achieving expected standards in listening and talking.

### Reading

- Most children make good progress in reading. At all levels, the genre of texts should be extended to include play scripts, poetry and graphic novels, and provide appropriate levels of challenge for all children.
- At early level, almost all children identify the title, author and illustrator of a text. They enjoy listening to stories and talk confidently about the main part. Across first level, most children explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. They identify correctly the key features of non-fiction texts. At second level, almost all children discuss a variety of authors, making links to their genre and style of writing. Most children can give examples of inference within a text. To support progression further, children across the school need to develop an understanding of effective reading strategies.

### Writing

- At early level, children write simple sentences and use simple connectives, with support. They write regularly through their play. For example, writing a shopping list and creating 'wanted' posters. Within first level, children write independently, punctuating most sentences correctly and using descriptive language well. At second level, children write across a range of genre. Most children use similes, metaphors and personification effectively to engage the reader. Across the school, children should continue to write across the curriculum for a range of purposes and different audiences.

### Listening and talking

- Children working within early level listen well to their teacher and to each other. They are beginning to take turns when talking, with support. Within first level, children recognise the difference between fact and opinion and contribute to discussions with increasing respect for the views and ideas of others. Children working within second level talk confidently to adults and peers. Almost all children understand the importance of eye contact, body language and

tone, depending on purpose and audience. Overall, children are confident, articulate and able to share their thoughts and ideas in a range of contexts.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children across the school make good progress. A few children make very good progress. A few children are capable of making even better progress.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, all children explore number confidently. They can count up in tens, identify patterns and talk about odd and even numbers. They develop a range of strategies and numerical skills through play-based learning and exploration. At first level, the majority of children are confident in finding half or quarter of a number. They carry out mental calculations using multiplication tables successfully. By second level, most children apply well their knowledge of financial education to a debt management project, making budgeting decisions around spending, saving and investing. Across the school, children should continue to apply learning in number, money and measure across the curriculum.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- At early level, all children explore pattern and shape in a range of contexts, including as part of outdoor learning. They incorporate their knowledge in this area into the sandcastles they build at the local beach. At first level, children know that a right angle is 90 degrees and can name the four main compass points. They are less confident in using appropriate mathematical language to describe the properties of a three-dimensional object. At second level, most children use their knowledge of angles to calculate supplementary and complementary angles. They describe confidently parts of a circle using appropriate vocabulary. Across the school, children need to revisit mathematical concepts on a more regular basis to ensure they retain and can apply their learning.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children explore simple bar charts and pictograms across the curriculum as part of their learning through play. Across first level, most children use tally marks to record information. They extract information from charts and Venn diagrams to answer questions. At second level, most children use a variety of methods to display information including line and bar graphs and pie charts. They use digital technology well to display data and information. Across the school, children should continue to develop their use of digital technology to support learning in information handling and relate this to real life contexts.

### **Attainment over time**

- Overall, data provided by the school indicates they have maintained high standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. Almost all children improve and make progress year on year. As staff develop further confidence in making judgements of children's progress and achievement through moderation activity, the data is becoming more reliable. The school does not yet track children's progress across all curriculum areas.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement.**

- Almost all children achieve through the wide range of groups, clubs and sporting activities on offer in the school. Achievements are shared and celebrated in a range of ways including pupil led assemblies, displays, newsletters and through the social media. As a result, children are developing a range of skills across the four capacities. They are developing positive attitudes and a sense of their responsibilities as global citizens. They take an interest in their local community and are becoming increasingly aware of how they can contribute

positively to it. Senior leaders and staff have begun to track children's participation to ensure no child misses out on participation and achievement.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders monitor the progress of individuals and groups of children. There are interventions and supports in place for children who do not make expected progress or who have barriers to their learning. The effective use of Pupil Equity Funding is improving attainment for identified children in literacy and numeracy. The use of digital technology to support children in literacy is having a positive impact on their learning and progress. Children who receive focused, targeted support to develop resilience in a nurturing way have increased confidence in listening and talking, and improved emotional wellbeing.

## School Empowerment

### ■ Empowering teacher leadership for improvement

- Teachers feel empowered to reflect critically on the work of the school, engaging increasingly in self-evaluation and identifying areas for improvement. There is a strong sense of teamwork amongst all staff and teachers work collaboratively in an ethos of trust, support and positive working relationships. Teachers value opportunities for professional learning and engage in regular professional dialogue with colleagues and the senior leadership team.
- Staff are empowered to lead and support each other in improving learning, teaching and assessment. They work in trios to observe agreed elements of each other's practice and capture children's perspective on how effective the lesson has been. Teachers then discuss the practice observed and suggest areas for improvement. They engage in challenging professional dialogue as they take a whole school approach to the four-part lesson model and develop a shared language of learning. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring the best outcomes for all learners.
- Almost all staff are involved in leading change for improvement. They feel empowered by professional learning activities at school and cluster level and are beginning to embrace opportunities to share practice at a regional level. A few have undertaken roles as trainers within the school to help colleagues develop further their practice in different areas such as conceptual numeracy. They are well supported by the acting headteacher and principal teacher. The acting headteacher maintains an overview of the range of initiatives to ensure change remains manageable. She encourages them to develop their own skills and interests in improving the work of the school and to reflect upon and evaluate the success and impact of what they have undertaken.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

The approach to play-based learning in P1 supports curiosity and inquiry in learning. Children regularly lead their own learning and demonstrate ably their skills as independent learners. Staff ensure there is no limit on learning within the class and children are motivated, engaged and enthusiastic learners. They display enthusiasm and excitement in their learning. There is a responsive approach to planning which ensures that children's ideas and interests are a key consideration, whilst ensuring they receive their entitlement to the full curriculum. Staff use observation well and know when to skilfully intervene to extend and support children's learning. As a result, almost all children at P1 make very good progress across the curriculum.

## 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.