

Summarised inspection findings

Auchterhouse Primary School

Angus Council

27 August 2019

Key contextual information

Auchterhouse Primary School is a rural school situated in the village of Kirkton of Auchterhouse in Angus. At the time of the inspection, the roll of the school was 33 children across two classes, P1-P4 and P5-P7. The headteacher had been in post for four months. The school had experienced issues in recruiting permanent staff and as a result, a number of supply teachers had been in classes in the few months prior to the inspection.

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

- Across the school, all staff create a welcoming environment that supports positive relationships between and amongst children, staff and parents. This is evident in all classes and helps to ensure that children participate well in their learning and are supportive of one another. The headteacher has focused on developing relationships with the wider community and ensuring the wellbeing of children and their families is a key priority for the school. This has led to all children feeling safe in school and enjoying their learning.
- In both multi-stage composite classes, most children are engaged and active participants in their learning. In the best examples, teachers provide relevant contexts for learning that motivate children well. Children understand the attributes of successful learners through the 'Auchterhouse Amazing Achievers'. They provide a common language to children which allows them to describe how these qualities support their learning. In addition, teachers encourage children to understand that they can learn from mistakes. This leads to children who are confident in discussing their learning in class and answering questions.
- Children experience a variety of opportunities to work as a whole class, small groups, in pairs or on their own. They interact well during activities and present as confident and responsible. Children learn together across different areas of the curriculum and parents contribute well to a number of these activities on a regular basis, providing expertise to the staff team. In most lessons, learning is well planned and organised. However, in some lessons, learning is not matched fully to the needs of all learners. Teachers should now improve planning to reflect the differing abilities of all children in the multi-stage composite classes. This will ensure appropriate challenge for all children.
- Some children actively contribute to the school in a number of ways, including being participants in groups such as the 'Learning Council' and 'Pupil Council'. Staff should now ensure all children have opportunities to participate in the life and work of the school and develop important leadership skills. Most children feel that their views are listened to and actioned. In the best examples, most children are involved in self-evaluating the learning experiences on offer. Teachers use this feedback to make changes to children's experiences. The headteacher should ensure that all teachers use feedback consistently across the school to allow them to adapt their practice accordingly.

- Children lead their learning through regular dialogue as a class, focusing on achievements and aspirations. Staff consult children at the planning stages to identify areas of interest linked to the experiences and outcomes being covered. They also engage well with their parents regularly to explain their learning. In moving forward, teachers should now work together to agree a consistent approach to profiling attainment and achievement which focuses on children setting meaningful targets and next steps in learning. This will support children to evidence confidently the progress they are making.
- Overall, the quality of teaching within the school is good with some very good examples. In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of lessons routinely. Children describe the task they are engaging in and in the best examples, they are clear about how they can achieve success. At all stages of the school, children independently organise aspects of their learning with minimal adult input. Staff support children to engage in both self- and peer-assessment. Teachers use interactive whiteboards as a teaching tool to enhance learning and teaching. The use of digital technology now needs to be developed further to enhance children's learning experiences.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. Teachers check children's understanding of their learning through effective questioning. In the best examples, teachers demonstrate skilled use of questioning which challenges and supports children to develop higher order thinking skills. Children discuss the use of feedback and how this supports them to identify what progress they are making and their next steps. Most children feel staff help them to understand how they are progressing in their school work. Teachers provide helpful oral feedback to children to convey when they have been successful in their learning. However, the quality and frequency of written feedback is variable. Teachers should now develop a clear strategy to ensure all children receive high quality feedback. This should be based on current research and dialogue with children to ensure this supports improvements in attainment.
- Teachers use standardised and ongoing assessments to evidence children's progress and understand their learning needs. For example, they use pre-teaching and post-teaching assessments to demonstrate how much children have learned and where they have improved their skills and performance. Teachers have also made a positive start to developing their understanding of holistic assessments. Teachers should now develop a consistent approach to the use of assessments across the academic year to ensure they are an integral part of planning, learning and teaching.
- Staff are reflective and committed to developing their practice. They engage with national guidance and are becoming more confident in using the benchmarks to support assessment and moderation of standards and expectations. They use progression pathways for literacy and numeracy to help develop coherent learning experiences for children. As a result, teachers' confidence in making judgements on children's progress is improving. The headteacher has identified the need for teachers to engage in opportunities to work collaboratively with staff in other schools on moderation activities. This will allow teachers to develop a better understanding of standards for children and will support them better in ensuring their professional judgement of progress, attainment and achievement is robust.
- The headteacher tracks children's progress through termly reviews which focus on children's attainment and progress. In consultation with staff, the headteacher identifies interventions to support children's continued progress. As discussed with staff, teachers should review these interventions regularly to ensure they continue to have a positive impact on children's progress.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

- The number of children at each stage in the school is small. Therefore, overall statements have been made about progression to ensure anonymity for individual children.
- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. According to the information provided by the school, almost all children are on track to achieve the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Most children across the school are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. There is scope for a few higher achieving children to make even better progress. Children requiring additional support for their learning are making progress in line with their individual learning needs. With improved planning and differentiation, there is scope for children who face barriers to their learning to make better progress. Information provided by the school includes examples of children's work, standardised assessments and teacher's evaluations. Inspection activity, which included observations of learning and meetings with focus groups of children, supports the school's data.

Literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is good. Almost all children are making good progress in all areas of literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children engage very well in discussions about texts and other aspects of their learning. They listen well to adults and to each other. Children wait their turn and contribute very well to class and group discussions. Children are particularly skilled in talking about their learning. At early and first level, children talk well about their books and stories. They identify the main ideas of texts and use good vocabulary to describe characters and events. At second level, children are skilled in contributing to class discussions by offering their personal views and opinions. They identify essential features required for public speaking and how to engage audiences.

Reading

- Children are developing a love of reading and almost all children read for pleasure on a regular basis. At first level, children identify favourite authors and can talk about their reading preferences. They have a good understanding of how grammar and punctuation is used to help them read with expression. Children at first level do not yet have a sound understanding of features of fiction and non-fiction books. They are not confident in responding to different types of questions such as literal or inferential questions about what they are reading. At second level, most children read fluently and with confidence. They talk about the types of books they enjoy and their favourite authors. They can apply strategies such as skimming and scanning to help them understand key ideas and locate information. Children require to develop skills in

understanding and analysis of texts through identification of features such as inferential and evaluative language.

Writing

- Across the school, children write well for a range of purposes using appropriate vocabulary. At early and first level, almost all children write independently using correct punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. Children create their own stories and other pieces of writing, such as letters and imaginative stories. Children working a first level make good use of interesting vocabulary in their writing and identify key features that make their stories more appealing such as the use of conjunctions and wow words. At second level, children create extended texts such as stories and speeches. They have a very good understanding of how language can be used to persuade the reader. Across the school, there is scope to improve presentation of written work and ensure children understand what they need to do to ensure their work is presented well and accessible to all readers.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making appropriate progress in numeracy and mathematics. Almost all are on track to achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels by the end of the current session. Across the school, children would benefit from increased opportunities to apply their numeracy and mathematics skills across the curriculum. This will support with the application of skills in a real and relevant context.

Number money and measurement

- At the early stages, all children use a variety of counting strategies to help them develop their understanding of addition and subtraction. They create equal groupings of objects and are beginning to make a link with their developing knowledge of multiplying and dividing. All children identify the value of different coins up to £2. By the end of first level, all children discuss a range of strategies to solve mental calculations and can describe how to use these. They identify equivalent fractions and calculate a fraction of a simple quantity. All children tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to using analogue and digital 12-hour clocks. By the end of second level, most children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value for whole numbers. They apply their knowledge of rounding to give an estimate to a calculation appropriate to the contexts. Most children carry out money calculations involving the four operations and through the school enterprise topic, apply their knowledge to calculate profit and loss. They calculate the perimeter and area of simple 2D shapes and choose the most appropriate measuring device for a given task.

Shape position and movement

- At the early stages, all children describe and create repeating patterns in the environment and identify lines of symmetry in simple shapes. By the end of first level, all use mathematical language accurately to describe the properties of a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. They know a right angle is 90 degrees and can identify these in the environment. By the end of second level, most children use appropriate mathematical language to describe and classify a range of angles. They apply their knowledge of 2D shapes and 3D objects to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between 3D objects and their nets.

Information handling

- At the early stages, all children sort objects based on different properties. By the end of first level, all children collect, organise and display data accurately using a variety of methods. By the end of second level, most children organise and display data appropriately in a variety of ways choosing the most appropriate method for the given task. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to analyse and interpret data in order to help them to draw conclusions.

Across the school, there is scope to increase the use of digital technology to support children's work in this area.

Attainment over time

- Overall most children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. The attainment data provided by the school for the past three years shows that attainment has improved in literacy and numeracy for cohorts of learners over time.

Overall quality of achievement

- The school is helping children understand themselves as learners. As a result, children identify the skills they use to help them achieve success. The learner qualities are used well by children to help them develop and apply skills such as perseverance and resilience. Children talk well about how learner qualities help them in their learning.
- The school celebrates children's personal achievements and wider school achievements through displays and class discussions. Children have achieved success in local swimming and football competitions. The school has recently won a bronze award for country dancing. The school should now widen opportunities for children to develop skills and achieve success. National guidance will help them identify appropriate activities and awards that are relevant to the rural context of the school and the needs of children. There is scope to develop and improve learner participation across the school and provide all children with opportunities to be more involved in leadership roles.
- Children and parents complete 'Learning Anywhere, Learning Anytime' (LALA) maps to help inform staff of children's participation in clubs and activities. As they develop tracking and monitoring approaches, staff should use this information to track achievements and identify children who may require targeted interventions.

Equity

- The recently appointed headteacher is strongly committed to ensuring the school is an integral part of the village community. For example, the local newsletter now includes a regular feature about the school to inform local residents of its work and achievements. Staff know families well and work with parents to ensure children are fully included in all aspects of school life. Staff have created an ethos where parents feel welcomed and active partners in their child's learning.
- The school's focus on health and wellbeing is enabling staff, children and parents to develop a good understanding of the social and emotional needs of children and identify issues that may present barriers to learning. As they continue to develop approaches to tracking and monitoring, staff should ensure that all children across the school are supported and challenged to achieve and attain as highly as possible.

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.