

Summarised inspection findings

Meethill Primary School and Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

4 February 2020

Key contextual information

Meethill School is situated in the town of Peterhead. The school has a roll of 190 children arranged across nine classes. The headteacher has been in post for three years and is supported by a deputy headteacher and principal teacher. The school has seen significant changes in staffing over the past three years and there is now appropriate staffing in place to support the work of the school.

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

- Across the school, there are positive and supportive relationships between adults and children. Parents and children are proud of the school. Most children are happy, enthusiastic and enjoy learning. The principles of nurture are beginning to be embedded across the school. As a result, an inclusive and caring ethos is developing. Most children behave well and engage well in their learning. Teachers make effective use of praise to build children's self-esteem and confidence. This includes during interactions and discussions in classes.
- In the majority of classes, teachers share the purpose of lessons and provide clear explanations and instructions. A few children identify the relevance of what they are learning. Teachers need to ensure that all children understand fully the aims of their learning and what they need to do to be successful. This will help them to understand the purpose of their learning and support them to see the progress they are making. In a few classes, children set targets for their learning. Teachers need to ensure all children set meaningful learning targets and that this practice is consistent across the school.
- In the majority of classes, teachers use a range of appropriate questions to gauge children's understanding. In a few classes, teachers use questions well to challenge children's thinking. Teachers should now work collaboratively to develop the range and type of questions asked, to check for depth of understanding. This will challenge and support children to develop higher order thinking skills.
- In a few lessons, children make effective use of digital technology to enhance their learning, particularly in literacy. A few teachers provide children with experiences and games in coding. This is developing children's confidence with digital literacy skills. Teachers should ensure children access a wider range of digital tools as a more regular feature of lessons across the school.
- When given the opportunity, the majority of children confidently express their views and ideas. They listen well to clear instructions given by teachers. In a majority of lessons, opportunities for children to develop independence and thinking skills need developed further. There are

missed opportunities for children to be involved in discussion and decision making about their learning. Children have the capacity to take increased responsibility for leading their own learning.

- Across the school, teachers provide children with a combination of verbal and written feedback. Children now need this to be more meaningful. This will support the children to know themselves as learners, and to identify confidently their next steps.
- Senior leaders have developed policies as part of the improvement planning process which aim to improve the consistency of learning and teaching. Teachers are beginning to focus on improving their approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. They have been involved in professional learning linked to learning and teaching with colleagues across the school cluster. They show enthusiasm to improve their practice. Teachers have identified the need to increase their expectations of what children can achieve.
- The headteacher recognises the need for a greater focus on ensuring consistently high quality learning experiences for all children. Staff should now move at pace to establish a shared understanding of high quality learning, teaching and assessment based on professional learning. Senior leaders should check these agreed approaches regularly to ensure they impact positively on children's experiences.
- Teachers prepare well for lessons and are supportive of each other. They regularly take part in informal discussions to develop their approaches to planning learning and teaching. They are beginning to use the experiences and outcomes more effectively in their planning and are at the early stages of using the National Benchmarks to support assessment. Staff should ensure that assessment activities focus more on how well children are achieving to inform the next steps in their learning more effectively. This will enable teachers to plan differentiated tasks and activities which are better matched to individual children's learning needs. In addition, this will support progress across Curriculum for Excellence levels more effectively.
- Staff support children who face potential barriers to their learning through interventions and targeted programmes. Senior leaders meet with teachers on a termly basis to review children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Teachers are at the early stages of using standardised assessments to support their professional judgement. A few teachers increasingly use assessment information and data to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions planned to improve outcomes for all children.

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

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

- The overall quality of children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is weak. Overall, data provided by the school for session 2018-19 shows that a minority of children achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy at P1 and P7 and the majority of children at P4. In numeracy, a minority of children achieved expected levels at P4 and P7. The majority of children achieved expected levels at P1. Across the school, most children could achieve more. Senior leaders need to raise expectations of what children are capable of achieving. They should provide staff with the appropriate professional learning to enable them to assess more accurately and record children's progress in learning. They should identify appropriate strategies with staff for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is weak.

Listening and talking

- Overall, children's progress in listening and talking is satisfactory. Across early level, the majority of children listen well to teachers and follow instructions. A few children talk confidently about simple stories from their reading and learning activities. A few children need support to develop further their listening skills to collaborate with their peers more effectively. At first level, most children work well individually, or in pairs, and are keen to contribute their ideas and opinions. A few children enthusiastically talk about their activities. At second level, the majority of children listen actively, collaborate well and explain their ideas confidently using wide range of vocabulary. Across the school, children need to develop further their listening and talking skills across all areas of the curriculum.

Reading

- Children's progress in reading is weak. At early level, a minority of children are beginning to read simple texts, and are developing their phonic awareness to help them read. They match pictures and text from their reading books. They need to apply the early reading skills they are developing to a wider range of texts. At first level, the majority of children read aloud and discuss the main points of a story. They are developing their vocabulary and use of language to describe their reading texts. At second level, a minority of children are developing vocabulary, word awareness and fluency. They answer inferential questions related to a text. They are less confident in discussing how the writer uses creative language to describe a character. They are beginning to talk about a range of their favourite authors. In a few classes, children make good use of digital technology to support their reading and spelling. Across the school, children need regular opportunities to read for enjoyment and to develop an increased range of reading skills. They need to develop these skills progressively across Curriculum for Excellence levels and to engage with a wider range of texts that are suitably challenging.

Writing

- Children's progress in writing is weak. Across all stages, children require an increased range of experiences to develop their skills and confidence to produce more creative and imaginative writing. Children are not yet confident in applying their writing skills effectively across the different genres. At early level, the majority of children copy text to form their stories. A few children are ready to add the 'tricky' words they are learning to these stories. They need more opportunities to write independently. At first level, the majority of children are beginning to write within a structure with mostly correct spelling. At second level, children write interesting character descriptions, and letters to complain and to inform. They need to write at length, in writing lessons and across the curriculum.

Numeracy and Mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is weak. There are a number of significant gaps in children's learning, particularly in mathematics. Children require an appropriate breadth of experiences to develop the range of skills necessary to understand and apply their learning. Teachers need to ensure they have clear expectations of progression through the levels to ensure an appropriate pace of learning for all learners.

Number Money and Measure

- At early level, a majority of children use one to one correspondence to count a given number of objects within 20, and count on and back in ones to add and subtract. They recognise coins to £2 and name the days of the week in sequence. They are less confident linking daily routines and personal events to time sequences. At first level, a minority of children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They need to use this skill more effectively to estimate and check solutions to questions. They use correct mathematical language when discussing the four operations and make accurate use of a range of instruments when measuring. They are less confident in solving problems in context and identifying the correct calculations to solve this. At second level, a minority of children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value. Children need to develop their understanding of the value of digits up to three decimal places. They are less confident in calculating simple fractions and percentages of a quantity. Across the school, most children need to develop a range of strategies to support their mental calculations. This will allow them to develop a deeper understanding of number processes.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children recognise the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. At first level, the minority of children use mathematical language to describe the features of 2D shapes. They are less confident in describing the properties of 3D objects. Most children would benefit from developing their understanding of right angles to support them in describing the size of other angles. At second level, the minority of children know that the radius of a circle is half of the diameter and use mathematical language to describe a range of angles. They are less confident in measuring and drawing a range of angles.

Information Handling

- There was limited evidence available to support children's progress in information handling. Children use a range of ways to collect information and sort it in a logical and organised way. They can extract information from a variety of data sets including bar graphs and tables. Children now need to apply and extend their information handling skills in real-life and meaningful contexts across the curriculum.

Attainment over time

- Teachers gather a range of information about children's attainment. They now need to make more effective use of this to improve children's progress and attainment in literacy and

numeracy over time. Teachers need to engage fully in data analysis to inform next steps and evaluate interventions in order to raise attainment and achievement. Senior leaders should now monitor the impact of the range of interventions and supports to ensure they maximise the impact of these on children's progress. Teachers need to continue to engage more fully with the National Benchmarks and in moderation activities. This will support the development of a shared understanding of standards that will strengthen the accuracy of professional judgements.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children participate in a range of experiences to help them develop important skills. These include a number of leadership groups, clubs and cluster activities. Through these, they are developing confidence and an understanding of how to work effectively with others. Staff celebrate children's wider achievements on noticeboards throughout the school, through social media and at regular assemblies. Teachers are beginning to track children's participation to ensure that all children are included in the range of experiences offered. Children need to develop their awareness of the skills they are gaining both within and out of school through the various experiences offered.

Equity for all learners

- Staff know and understand the needs of children and families. They are developing a clearer understanding of the context of the school. Senior leaders have taken steps to improve systems and processes to identify and address barriers to learning. They use Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to enhance staffing. There is a need for senior leaders to identify clearly the impact this additional staffing is having on raising attainment for identified children. In moving forward, staff should continue to consider the unique context of the school and the community it serves as part of their on-going self-evaluation. This will ensure that they identify appropriate interventions and supports to raise attainment for all.

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.