

Summarised inspection findings

Cunningsburgh Primary School

Shetlands Islands Council

04 September 2018

Key contextual information

The school has experienced a number of changes of leadership over the past ten years. The current headteacher, for half of her working week, also has responsibility for teaching children who require additional support with their learning, in addition to teaching in the early learning centre.

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 is well regarded by staff and parents. She places a high priority on supporting and nurturing all children and promotes an ethos of community across children, staff, parents and partners. She manages the day-to-day life of the school in a calm and purposeful way. The headteacher promotes a collaborative style of leadership and consults widely with staff who are also appreciative of the personal support she provides.
- The headteacher recognises the need to refresh the school's vision, values and aims to ensure they incorporate the key aspects of the local context, as well as reflecting national priorities such as Developing the Young Workforce and Getting it right for every child. It would be beneficial to capture what the school and local community want to achieve for their children in the refresh of the vision, values and aims. The refresh of the vision, values and aims will also support the development of a clearer curriculum rationale, which reflects the high importance staff, parents and children place on Shetland culture, in addition to supporting curricular improvement.
- The leadership of the headteacher supports a steady approach to change in a school where there have been a number of changes of leadership over recent years. The headteacher has taken account of teacher workload and the need to reduce levels of bureaucracy when implementing change. For example, she has introduced renewed approaches to planning and reporting, which are reducing bureaucracy for teachers. This is creating a culture where staff are feeling increasingly prepared to participate in well-informed change with greater pace and challenge.
- Improvement planning takes account of national and local authority priorities. The school improvement plan has a priority of using the local authority 'Emerging Literacy' strategy at early level to address the attainment gap. There is not yet evidence of the impact of this approach on outcomes for children. Whilst the plan gives information about tasks to be completed, there should be a greater focus on the intended outcomes for children such as raised attainment. This would help all staff, to monitor the progress and impact of improvement work on an ongoing basis. We have asked the headteacher and staff to consider what evidence they gather to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's work.
- Overall, there is a need for more systematic and rigorous self-evaluation, to make robust judgements about the standards and quality of provision and outcomes for learners. This

approach should be in line with the headteacher's focus on reducing teacher workload. The headteacher carries out a range of informal activities to monitor the quality of children's experiences. Classroom observations are not yet a feature of the school's quality assurance programme. Staff should develop more robust approaches to tracking and monitoring progress of all learners with a clear focus on raising attainment. Planning and attainment meetings should include more rigorous discussion related to meeting the needs of all children and raising attainment. A next step would be to develop a more systematic approach to using self-evaluation. A whole-school quality assurance calendar, including regular observations of learning, would support this process.

- The headteacher has identified the need to use data about children's progress more strategically in order to raise attainment. Individual children's progress is tracked at class level and discussed termly. There should now be a greater focus at a whole-school level on analysing this information to identify patterns, trends and areas for improvement. We suggest that the documentation supporting the monitoring of the work of the school becomes more streamlined and focussed. Other aspects of quality assurance, such as sampling children's work need to become more rigorous and support increased expectations of children's learning.
- Staff are proactive in taking on leadership roles in order to take forward improvement priorities. They increasingly take good account of the social, economic and cultural context of children and their families. Staff at all levels are committed to driving improvements in pedagogy. They are taking forward developments in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, language learning in Scotland, a 1+2 approach, and health and wellbeing. They should now evaluate the impact of these on children's learning, engagement and attainment. Staff work regularly with colleagues across the cluster on moderation. This is supporting the development of a greater understanding of levels, through work with the National Benchmarks. Moving forward, it will be important for the headteacher to ensure that all development work aligns with the strategic direction of the school and is underpinned by the vision, values, and aims. Changes should be prioritised and managed carefully to encourage sustainability and raised attainment.
- All staff benefit from regular professional review meetings with the headteacher. Staff are positive about the opportunities they have to identify professional learning needs and about learning opportunities. They have engaged in leadership courses. Professional learning should now be more focussed on the school improvement priorities that will lead to improved outcomes and better attainment.
- Parents are involved in taking on leadership roles within the school such as Bikeability, sports clubs and a knitting club. The Parent Council (PC) is consulted about school improvement planning. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire feel comfortable in approaching the school with suggestions and encouraged to be involved in the work of the PC.
- There is considerable scope to develop pupil voice across the school and provide more opportunities for children to be involved in change and improvement.

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

- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching across the school is good. Across the school there is a very positive and engaging environment for learning. Relationships between staff and children are positive and nurturing. The school should build a shared understanding of effective approaches to learning and teaching that ensures all children receive an appropriate level of pace and challenge across the curriculum.
- Children come to school highly motivated and enjoy their learning. Through a range of engaging, active learning opportunities across the curriculum, children frequently work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. Teachers now need to work together to provide a coherent experience across all levels. Planning for learning at a brisker pace and providing a more consistent level of challenge for individuals and groups within each class will ensure that learning activities are well-matched to the needs and abilities of all children. This will add value to their school experience.
- Overall staff provide clear explanations during their teaching. In almost all lessons observed, teachers shared learning intentions and as a result, children are clear on the purpose of their learning. There is scope to involve children more in generating success criteria and ensuring these are more closely matched to the intended learning.
- Most teachers use questioning to good effect to check understanding and build on prior learning. In a few lessons, teachers used well-considered questions to scaffold and extend learning. Staff should now share this good practice to ensure higher order questioning is developed more consistently.
- Teachers support learners well throughout learning, making positive interventions when necessary and holding back on other occasions. This encourages children to think through and discuss with their peers to find a way forward themselves. Teachers use assessment strategies well. This is helping children understand what they are learning and be clear about what is expected of them. There is a focus on using assessment from day-to-day learning and teaching to plan well-timed interventions and next steps for individuals and groups to support or extend learning. The existing good practice in providing oral and written feedback to help inform learners of their next steps in learning should be shared across the school to give consistency of message. All staff should further develop their skills in providing more evaluative feedback to help pupils understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.
- Children are keen to share what they have learned with one another and are confident when talking about their tasks and activities. As a result of these regular opportunities to talk about their learning, they are becoming more confident in discussing what they have done well and

what they need to improve. This should now be used more effectively across the school in learning conversations and target setting.

- The school has begun to review the place of interdisciplinary learning in the curriculum. This is supporting teachers in the planning and assessment of interdisciplinary learning, including aspects of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Children do have some opportunities to be involved in planning to ensure personalisation and choice. There is scope for this approach to assist the school in making more meaningful links across children's learning and provide opportunities for children to develop and apply skills for learning, life and work in motivating contexts.
- There are a few examples of children using digital technology to support their learning well. The school now needs to further develop its information technology and communications pathways to ensure they are progressive and relevant.
- Planning has been reviewed to ensure workload is proportionate and tackles bureaucracy. Staff should continue to review their approaches to planning to further minimise bureaucracy. Planning and tracking meetings provide an opportunity for class teachers and the headteacher to discuss strategies, interventions and next steps for all pupils particularly those requiring challenge or support. Staff are sufficiently aware of which children face additional challenges and provide additional support. Pupil support assistants are timetabled effectively providing a balance of direct support to individual pupils and wider support for learning. The intelligence gathered from these meetings now needs to be closely monitored through formal and informal classroom observations.
- The revised approaches to reporting including the use digital technology are having a positive impact on family learning. The online platform is being accessed by almost all parents providing very regular updates on children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Across the school, there is a focus on children receiving a broad and balanced curriculum, which gives them access to their entitlements within Curriculum for Excellence. The school plans to revisit the curriculum rationale for the school to ensure all staff have a clearer shared understanding of what the school is trying to achieve across all contexts of learning and through interdisciplinary learning. In due course, this will help staff plan together for more cohesive approaches and clearer skills progressions across the school in all areas of the curriculum. The principles of curriculum design are evident in the work of individual classes, but there is not as yet a whole school approach underpinned by a curriculum rationale. There now needs to be a strategic approach to developing the curriculum. Staff should build further on the unique features of the Cunningsburgh context and how this influences curriculum developments.
- Alongside the development of the revised rationale for the curriculum, staff should consider how time is fully used on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis and avoid any downtime.
- The curriculum builds very successfully in working with partners in the local community and beyond. These partnerships support the curriculum and out-of-class activities very well. The school should continue to refine its curriculum allowing children to make more meaningful connections across their learning and across different curriculum areas. The planned focus on developing skills for learning, life and work and creativity will help this happen.
- There is an urgent need to accelerate progress in the development of progressive pathways for literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, providing greater challenge. Clear progression pathways will maximise children's opportunities to attain.
- Learning programmes across all other curriculum areas are being reviewed, to ensure suitable learning experiences across all levels.
- 1+2 language is being implemented in a planned and progressive manner.
- Further development of learning for sustainability and learning outdoors is a priority given the context of the school.
- There is scope for staff in the early stages to develop the purpose of play in meaningful contexts further. Children would benefit from play that both consolidates and extends their learning of skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. It is important that a shared pedagogy is developed providing a continuum of experience and learning across the three years of the early level.
- Children benefit from a wide range of out-of-class activities such as cross-country and other sporting and musical activities. They apply these skills in local competitions with great success. Of particular note is the involvement in Shetland Peerie Makkers.
- Transition arrangements at P7 now need to include the sharing of learner pathways to provide greater continuity and progression with appropriate challenge.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school has strong relationships with parents/carers and the community. Parents speak highly of the approachability of the headteacher and her efforts to engage them more fully in the life of the school. Parents are actively encouraged to use their skills and expertise to increase opportunities for the children and celebrate local culture at events such as the Shetland Heritage Day.
- There is regular communication with parents through a social media platform. This is enhancing communication and allows for news, events and messages to be shared between home and school. Almost all parents who responded to the Education Scotland questionnaire feel that they receive helpful, regular feedback about how their child is developing and learning at school.
- The school is supported by a strong and effective partnership with the PC. The PC is consulted on the school improvement plan. There is scope to involve parents further in evaluating the work of 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 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

- Relationships between children, their peers and adults are very positive. They are founded on a climate of mutual respect and the worth of every individual. There is a strong sense of community across the school and this is resulting in children being proud and having a sense of belonging to the school. Individuals are valued, encouraged and respected. Learning support assistants work very well with children and provide valuable support to ensure children requiring additional support can access their learning. This creates a culture where children are supported to achieve and they know who to turn to if they need support. The planned revision of the school's values and vision statement is intended to reflect the involvement of children in leading their learning and a strong commitment to children's rights.
- Almost all children say that they feel safe and cared for in school. Staff are committed to improving outcomes for children and supporting their learning. They know children well and have a good understanding of their strengths, family circumstances and support needs.
- All staff are committed to ensuring improvements in wellbeing. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the wellbeing indicators to plan teaching and learning to help children develop a clear understanding of their own wellbeing. Children are beginning to understand the risks associated with social media and the importance of exercise and healthy eating. They understand their role in relation to wellbeing and the impact on learning for children and their families. It is important that steps are taken to ensure the language of wellbeing is understood by parents, staff and children.
- All children have regular opportunities to participate in a range of clubs at lunchtime and after school. A few are developing leadership skills and contribute to the life of the school through their involvement in the pupil council.
- The school has good understanding of its statutory duties. The school and partner agencies follow local and national guidance in terms of implementing Getting it right for every child requirements to identify, plan and review children's needs. The school should, as planned, review the procedures for staged intervention to develop a more strategic approach and ensure children are consulted and receive the most appropriate support according to their needs. This should include more robust monitoring and tracking of the effectiveness of interventions.
- The overview of children requiring additional support helps to identify need across the school. This details children's needs and how they are being supported. The headteacher plans to review the strategy for support for learning. Children who require additional support should be supported through more personalised learning plans. The number of children with individualised educational plans should be reviewed.

- Support for Learning teachers work in close partnership with classroom teachers to identify and provide a range of additional support for children. As discussed, they now need to work more closely together to review progress and ensure that support is appropriately directed. Children receive additional support in their own class from learning support assistants. In addition, a small number of children receive direct support for their learning individually and in groups outwith their classroom. Pastoral transitions are well planned and there is enhanced transition for children with additional support needs.
- The school meets its statutory requirements in relation to religious observance and religious education.
- The inclusive and supportive ethos of the school is having a positive impact on all learners. Children benefit from the school's inclusive environment where they have equal opportunities to learn and participate in wider activities. Overall attendance is above the national average. There have been no exclusions over the past five years. A range of partners is well engaged in supporting the school's strategies for these children and families. The school now needs to develop approaches to equality and diversity and what this means in terms of race, disability and gender to equip children as citizens for 21st Century Scotland.

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

- As numbers in almost all cohorts are fewer than ten children, figures in percentages are not quoted here as individual children may be identified. In June 2017, across the school almost all children achieved expected Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading, most in listening and talking and the majority in writing and numeracy. It is the view of inspectors, based on classroom observations, scrutiny of children's work and focus groups of children, that children have the capacity to be challenged further. Consideration should be given to this across the school at all levels, so that appropriate planning and learning opportunities are provided to enable all children to reach their full potential. Staff are beginning to use data analysis information from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments to inform their teaching and enable them to have a clearer understanding of children's progress. Staff report that this is improving their professional judgment of achievement of a level, alongside cluster moderation, and focusing on a more holistic approach to assessment.
- Staff have been engaging with the National Benchmarks and this is helping to confirm their professional judgement. However, the school needs to increase opportunities for effective moderation activities to enable robust data on achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level to be generated.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, progress in literacy and English is good.

Listening and Talking

- Almost all children are making very good progress in listening and talking across all stages. They are developing and applying skills in listening and talking across their learning. Children can demonstrate their ability to listen well to each other and to adults in a very respectful manner. During activities, children respond confidently to questions asked of them. Responses are detailed and relevant. In the upper stages, almost all children can contribute a number of relevant ideas, information and opinions when engaging with others. They are able to justify their opinions and build on the contribution of others. They can identify the difference between fact and opinion with suitable explanation.

Reading

- Almost all children, are engaging well with a range of texts across learning and are selecting texts for their personal reading. Almost all children, working at the early stages, can choose a story for enjoyment and share their likes and dislikes. Almost all children, in the middle stages, select texts for enjoyment and can explain why they prefer certain authors. They can make predictions about the story using the illustration and blurb on the cover. At the upper stages almost all children can identify the purpose of a text with suitable explanation. They

can identify the key features of language used by the author. Children at the middle and upper stages, told inspectors that they would welcome more challenging texts. The range of texts should be closely monitored to ensure that these are meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able.

Writing

- The majority of children are making good progress in writing. At the early stages, children are beginning to write sentences with support from an adult. By the middle stages, the majority of children write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. They can organise writing in a logical order in an appropriate format. By the upper stages, the majority of children use sentences of different lengths and types and vary sentence openings. Most can link sentences using a range of conjunctions and can use paragraphs. Across the school, children have opportunities to write across a range of genre and for a variety of purposes. Local context is used effectively to inspire children to write. However, expectations about the standard of presentation of written work across the school are inconsistent and should be developed further.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good.

Number Money and Measurement

- At early stages, almost all children are confident in working with numbers to 20 and can order them forwards and backwards. They are able to add and subtract within ten and a few children, are able to add and subtract confidently within 20. At middle stages, children are confident in multiplying by 2, 3, 5 and 10 and have an understanding of place value. By the upper stages, children can confidently use division to change an improper fraction to a mixed number. They can compare costs and determine affordability within a given budget. By the upper stages, the majority of children demonstrate a sound understanding of multiplication facts and place value. Children's mental calculation skills would benefit from activities that provide increased pace and challenge and the opportunity for teachers and children to discuss a variety of mental calculation strategies.

Shape, position and movement

- As they progress through the school, children are developing an understanding of the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Children need to develop a better understanding of the importance of using a ruler and the accuracy required when creating symmetrical shapes. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to using digital technology to enhance the teaching of shape at all stages.

Information Handling

- In the middle and upper stages, the majority of children are able to use mathematical language appropriately to describe the likelihood of events occurring in everyday situations.

Attainment over time

- At the current time it is impossible to make an accurate statement on attainment over time, as the data is not available. The small numbers of children at a number of stages make it difficult to identify trends over time. The school should explore further approaches to showing evidence of improvement. Staff recognise the need to strengthen their approaches to tracking and measuring the effectiveness of interventions to ensure continuous progress for all children across all curriculum areas.

- Children who may require additional support with their learning are supported very well and their progress is tracked over time. Staff are aware of relevant personal circumstances and targeted support is planned.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children across the school are very happy and confident. They are very proud of their school and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to succeed in community events, in sporting and cultural activities. Children's achievement is firmly rooted in the community and culture of the Shetland Islands. Many opportunities exist, in areas such as music and art to share children's participation and successes. There are also a number of out-of-class curricular clubs, such as netball club, gymnastics and knitting to develop interests and talents. Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated well through awards, shared at assemblies, on displays across the school and in the local media. The school should now, as planned, audit children's participation in the opportunities provided and develop a system for tracking and monitoring their wider achievement to ensure that no child is in danger of missing out. This should also help children to recognise the skills they are developing as a result of participating in wider achievement opportunities and how this links with the world of work.

Equity for all learners

- All staff know their children very well and they respond sensitively to any economic or emotional and social need. This session the school has accessed an additional school assistant to give targeted support through Pupil Equity Funding. As yet, there is no evidence to support impact.
- The school has a clear overview of those children who require additional support to overcome barriers to their learning. Senior leaders and staff have a good knowledge of individual children within the school.

Choice of QI: 2.5 Family Learning

This indicator focuses on increasing the positive impact of working with families to improve learning and achievement. The emphasis is on schools working in partnership with others in the community to support families to secure better outcomes through programmes which enable them to improve literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The themes are:

- engaging families in learning
- early intervention and prevention
- quality of family learning programmes

- The headteacher and staff are committed to engaging families in learning and in providing support to families. Staff pride themselves on the positive relationships they have with families and the mutual trust and respect that exists. They have a sound knowledge of the local context in which children live and possible challenges and barriers they may encounter. Universal support is offered to all families through ongoing communication with staff via a social media platform, an open-door policy and a welcoming school ethos. Parents are invited to attend regular whole-school learning events that celebrate children's learning and the culture of the local community. Almost all parents, across the primary school and nursery class who responded to the Education Scotland questionnaire stated that the school gives advice on how to support their child's learning at home.
- Practitioners in the nursery class work hard and have been successful in developing positive and trusting relationships with families. Most parents of children in the primary stages and almost all of those in the nursery class who responded to the Education Scotland questionnaire, stated that the school organises activities where parents and children can learn together. A range of home link learning resources are utilised across the year including a library, story sacks and a take-home toy. There is scope to involve parents and carers further in the learning within the nursery class, for example, stay and play sessions as well as sharing events. This will support the development of a shared understanding of early learning pedagogy.
- In order to progress the development of family learning, it will now be useful to develop a shared understanding, rationale, vision and aims of family learning at Cunningsburgh Primary School. This should be developed with all stakeholders involved and to determine what families would find useful, thus securing successful implementation.
- The school is keen to offer high-quality targeted support to families, with help from partners that enable them to access learning activities that meet their interests. This provides an opportunity for parents and families to be involved in the design and delivery of programmes, for example, to make them accessible to all. The development of family learning programmes is at the earliest stages of development. There is considerable scope for families to be more engaged in this area and participate in designing and delivering high-quality learning programmes within the school and local community. For example, literacy and numeracy sessions delivered by staff could enable parents to gain a deeper understanding of what is taught at the school and the methodologies deployed. This could support the next step of moving from parental involvement towards family learning and foster even stronger home-school links.

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.