

Summarised inspection findings

Sunnybank School

Aberdeen City Council

16 May 2023

Key contextual information

Sunnybank School is located to the northeast of the centre of Aberdeen. The school roll currently sits at 311 children, plus 73 children in the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting and 10 children in the Language Support Provision (LSP). Children from Aberdeen School for the Deaf attend lessons in the school on a split-placement basis and are included within the overall school roll of 311 children. The school building also includes Aberdeen City's Additional Support Needs (ASN) and Outreach Service, Sensory Support Service and Hearing Support Service. In addition, the Aberdeen School for the Deaf and a community centre supporting children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) are located in the school building. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, two deputy headteachers and two principal teachers. During the last academic year and this academic year there have been staffing challenges and absence across the whole school. The school roll fluctuates from year to year and includes children from a wide variety of cultures and ethnicity. Parents and children speak a range of home languages.

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

- Class teachers demonstrate warm and caring relationships with the children. Almost all children are respectful and polite. Most children are eager to learn. All children across the school are learning British Sign Language (BSL). Senior leaders and staff are committed to BSL as relevant and purposeful learning for children. The whole school team work successfully in partnership with Aberdeen School for the Deaf. In the best lessons, children work well together. Senior leaders should continue to share this effective practice across the school. This will ensure expectations identified within the school improvement plan are achieved and improve further the quality of learning and teaching approaches.
- Senior leaders and staff have identified key priorities to support the improvement and quality of teaching. These include improving the effective use of feedback and approaches that help children understand how they learn. These approaches are beginning to support children to feel more confident and understand what they are learning. Staff are at the early stages of developing their understanding of the purpose, entitlement and impact of outdoor learning. Senior leaders recognise this area as an essential next step in their improvement journey.
- Staff are increasingly using digital tools and technology during lessons to support and enhance learning and teaching for all children. They use a variety of digital tools well to support children experiencing barriers to learning. Most children are supported by staff to use devices to upload learning experiences onto online platforms. Staff need to ensure this consistently captures significant learning and supports children to reflect on their learning.
- Most teachers share learning intentions and success criteria with children at the start of each lesson. The majority of children can talk about what they are doing but not consistently about

what they are learning. As planned, children should be more involved in identifying how they will know they have been successful. This will help them to better lead their learning and become more confident in assessing their own work and that of their peers.

- There are major strengths in the quality of learning and teaching in the Language Support Provision (LSP). Staff use a range of creative approaches to support children in their language and communication. They work very effectively with partners and implement strategies which result in bespoke learning and teaching approaches. This helps motivate and engage children in their learning. Senior leaders should share this effective practice across the primary stages. This would support the need to develop further consistently high-quality learning and teaching to ensure it meets the needs of all learners. Most teachers use questioning well to check children's understanding. A few teachers use open-ended questions to extend children's thinking. There has been a focus on improving effective feedback for learning and staff use the language of 'Tell Ask Give' (TAG). This helps children to formulate helpful feedback for each other, especially in writing, to support next steps. Teachers need to improve how they communicate effective feedback to children appropriate to their age and stage. This should also provide additional challenge for all children and improve their motivation. Learning conversations would more effectively help children gain a better understanding of their achievements and next steps in learning.
- Senior leaders and staff are at the early stages of implementing play-based pedagogy. They would benefit from further use of the national practice guidance 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'. This should support them to make links between practice, theory and policy guidance. This will ensure staff have a greater understanding of how P1 children are experiencing learning based on the principles of the national practice guidance. Staff would benefit from developing further their current practice around the role of the adult in a play environment.
- Most teachers use a range of formative and summative assessment approaches within learning and teaching. These approaches are outlined in an assessment calendar. Children complete baseline assessments at key points throughout the school year. A few teachers are beginning to plan high quality assessments. These should now be developed further by all teachers to provide children with opportunities to demonstrate breadth, depth and application of learning. The majority of teachers do not yet consistently include assessment in their planning for learning and teaching. Senior leaders and teachers should ensure results from assessments directly influence next steps in learning and support professional judgements to evidence progress. This will better support planning of next steps and for learners to better understand the progress they are making.
- Senior leaders should continue with plans to provide opportunities for moderation to be a more regular feature of the collegiate calendar. This will allow teachers to work together within the school and with colleagues in other schools. Moderation activities have been interrupted by the pandemic and staff absence in recent years. The reinstatement of these opportunities will build confidence in professional judgements. This will support teachers further to develop a shared understanding of national standards across the curriculum.
- All children requiring targeted support have an individualised education programme (IEP) in place. Teachers identify learning targets for children and review their progress in meeting their goals regularly. Teachers now need to ensure that targets within IEPs are tailored more specifically to the additional support needs of the learner. Greater consideration should be given to identifying and monitoring the effectiveness of personalised strategies put in place to support children to achieve their goals.

- Teachers have opportunities to work together to plan learning experiences across all curricular areas. They make appropriate use of long term, medium and short-term approaches to plan well, identifying what is to be learned and assessed. When learning is well planned, children work effectively together in pairs and groups and are enthusiastic in their learning. This well-planned learning needs to be more consistent across the school to improve the overall quality of children's learning experiences. Senior leaders have introduced approaches to involve children more in planning their learning with their teachers. Teachers are beginning to implement these approaches in order to develop further children's motivation to lead their own learning. All children have their own core learning targets for literacy. Targets should now be more consistently and clearly planned in numeracy and health and wellbeing with next steps in learning identified for all children.

- Senior leaders discuss tracking information for literacy and numeracy with class teachers three times per year. Information gathered supports the planning of interventions for children who would benefit from extra help. There now needs to be a clearer focus during tracking discussions on the attainment and achievement of individual children, identified groups and cohorts. Senior leaders should review approaches to tracking and monitoring to ensure that there are clear processes to include all curricular areas. These processes need to be used more effectively to map more clearly each child's learning journey over time. As planned, senior leaders need to ensure that data gathered is used to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions 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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is weak, particularly at early and first level. Less than half of the children at P1 and P4 attain appropriate Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in reading and writing. Children's attainment in listening and talking is slightly stronger with the majority of children at these stages achieving appropriate CfE levels. By the end of P7 attainment improves, and the majority of children achieve CfE second level in reading and writing, and most achieve second level in listening and talking. The majority of children achieve expected CfE levels in numeracy at P1 and P7. Less than half of P4 children are achieving expected CfE levels in numeracy. Children are not yet making good enough progress from their prior levels of attainment.
- Senior leaders and teachers do not yet use assessments consistently well to support professional judgement of children's progress and attainment throughout the school. As a result, data provided is not yet consistently reliable or accurate. Senior leaders and teachers need to analyse data more closely. This will help them track pupil progress over time to identify individuals and groups of learners who are not making expected progress. This should include learners who have barriers to their learning, including additional support needs. This will allow senior leaders to focus resources, support and interventions for children who need it most and measure outcomes for learners more robustly.
- Teachers need support to accurately assess, monitor and track children's progress over time. As planned, a more collegiate approach and re-establishment of the moderation process across the school will support this priority. Senior leaders should build the confidence of teachers in their use of a range of assessments, data and moderation activities to ensure professional judgements are more robust. This will improve the reliability of data based on professional judgements.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are not yet making sufficient progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across all stages, children listen well in class and can follow instructions. A few children across the school become disengaged when listening as a whole class and need support to engage in learning tasks. At early level, children can listen to and follow instructions to complete a simple task independently or in small groups. At first level, children can identify the main ideas in a story or text they have heard. They can answer questions to show their understanding. At second level, children can identify the main ideas of texts they have listened to or watched. They make notes on the main ideas, which they use to create new texts such as information leaflets. Across the school, children now need more regular

opportunities to talk in groups and in front of their class. This will build confidence in communicating clearly in a variety of situations.

Reading

- Across all stages, children have regular opportunities to read for enjoyment, listen to stories and read with a group. Children understand why reading is an important skill. At early level, less than half of children can use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. At first level, children are beginning to use a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words such as letter patterns and context clues. Most children do not yet read fluently and with expression. At second level, the majority of children can answer inferential and evaluative questions on a known text, demonstrating their understanding. They can talk about the features of texts and are able to discuss books they have read and predict what might happen next. Most children at first and second level need to increase their understanding and use of a range of genres. Children at first level need to develop further their confidence in answering increasingly complex questions about the texts they are reading. Overall, children should be supported to read and to listen to a wider range of appropriately challenging and age-appropriate texts. This would better support progress.

Writing

- Overall, children are not making sufficient progress in the development of writing skills. At early level, a few children can write simple sentences with punctuation and are beginning to add joining words. They can sequence events. The majority of children at first and second level write effectively using a variety of genres including imaginative stories, poems, personal accounts and information texts. Children would benefit from a focus on tools for writing. This should include independent use of a range of spelling strategies and writing in a fluent and legible way. Children at second level write fairy tales and poems in Scots language and use digital technology well to support writing. All children would benefit from opportunities to revisit their writing to edit and improve their work based on feedback given. This will support children to check their writing makes sense and meets its purpose. This would help to extend learning for those children who require more challenge and support learners who find writing challenging.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Children who have attained early level, count forwards and backwards using practical materials and number lines. A few children can add and subtract to 20. Overall, most children are not yet confident in adding and subtracting mentally to 10. They are confident counting objects and know a number name is given to the total. They link daily events to time sequences. At first level, the majority of children can correctly identify place value within three-digit numbers. Most children are less confident with the use and recognition of fractions. They can tell the time on analogue clocks. Most children at first level would benefit from more practice using measurement in real life situations. Children working towards second level use multiplication and division facts and carry out calculations involving the four operations. Most children can read and record time in both 12-hour and 24-hour notation. Most children working at second level are less confident using decimals and percentages. Across all stages, children should develop further their application of numeracy and mathematical skills, knowledge and strategies using real life problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and name two-dimensional shapes. At first level, the majority of children can identify faces, sides and edges of three-dimensional objects. At second

level, the majority of children can explain the difference between right, obtuse and acute angles. Children would benefit from further opportunities to calculate measurements for real life objects and convert units of measurement.

Information handling

- At early level, most children can read pictograms and interpret simple graphs and charts. Most children can sort objects in a variety of different ways. At first level, most children use a variety of different methods to gather data. The majority of children can create and interpret bar graphs, line graphs and pie charts. At second level, most children can analyse and interpret data. This builds upon their understanding of the impact and influence of mathematics in the world of life and work. At second level, most children should develop further their use of technology to display data and use label and scale.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders collect information on children's attainment at key points in the year. They are not yet using this data effectively to evidence attainment and achievement of learners over time. They now need to analyse data for different groups of children over time to evidence the impact of learning experiences or interventions. As a priority, senior leaders should now have a clearer focus on evidencing how staff accurately evidence and accelerate children's progress. Teachers should be more involved in this process and regular, more rigorous tracking meetings need to take place. This will allow senior leaders and teachers to focus improvement work on groups of children who are not making expected progress or for whom progress could be accelerated. Children with barriers to learning should be tracked carefully to ensure they are making progress in their learning and to measure the impact of interventions.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements within and outside school through displays and assemblies. Senior leaders and staff increasingly work with partners to provide opportunities for children to engage with a variety of different sports including rugby and swimming. Children are not able to describe the skills they are developing through their achievements. Senior leaders should now record clearly what children are achieving as a result of these experiences. This should result in children who can talk about the skills for learning, life and work.
- A minority of children are building leadership skills well through their participation in a range of activities and groups. These include daily responsibilities, lunchtime clubs and a rights-based group. Senior leaders are at an early stage of tracking children's participation in clubs, involvement in leadership roles and other activities within the school and local community. This information should now be used to ensure that no child is at risk of missing out.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context of the school and wider community and are aware of the challenges facing families. These include increased energy prices and the cost of accessing additional activities outside school that can enhance children's learning.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional staffing to support children with barriers to learning and those affected by poverty. Additional staffing is used to support the emotional and social wellbeing of children through nurturing approaches and individual support. Staff and children speak positively about these nurturing approaches. Senior leaders have not yet gathered evidence to illustrate the impact of the nurturing approaches and

individual support on children's progress and how this is closing the poverty related attainment gap. As a matter of urgency, senior leaders need to review the impact of this support. They should ensure PEF is being used productively to close the poverty related attainment gap for identified learners.

Context

The Language Support Provision (LSP) is placed within Room 28 of the school. The LSP provides support for children with learning needs predominantly centred around developmental language disorder (DLD) from across Aberdeen City Council. Room 28 has two teachers and an early years practitioner (EYP).

They work in partnership with visiting speech and language therapists. At the time of inspection, the LSP is supporting 10 children, all of whom are on full-time placements.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- There are major strengths in the quality of learning and teaching in the Language Support Provision (LSP).
- Teachers work very closely in partnership with speech and language therapists. Speech and language therapists provide effective strategies to support children to overcome any difficulties they face with their learning. They have a particular focus on how children understand or use language. This is enabling children to build their language skills and engage more fully in learning activities.
- Staff in Room 28 are adopting a range of creative, bespoke learning and teaching approaches to help motivate and engage children in their learning. High staff to learner ratios are used productively and sensitively. Children benefit from well-targeted one-to-one input as well as working in pairs and small groups. Teachers incorporate a variety of learning approaches well including independent tasks, collaborative working and a mix of practical and desk-based activities. In almost all lessons, children work purposefully and enthusiastically through tasks and activities. They respond very well to organised, structured learning and are particularly motivated by the use of digital technology, practical activities and outdoor learning. In a few lessons, teachers need to ensure they are not overly reliant on worksheet-based learning activities.
- All staff in Room 28 have very caring and nurturing relationships with children. They help children to feel safe, included and confident in seeking support when required. All children are happy, well behaved, polite and keen to share their learning and achievements. They are very proud of being a Room 28 learner.
- Teachers and speech and language therapists assess robustly children's needs upon their arrival at the LSP. They use this information well to plan individualised education programmes (IEPs) for each child. Teachers review children's progress on a regular basis, setting new targets for learners' based well on prior learning and achievements. Supported by senior leaders, teachers should now strengthen their approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress. In doing so, they should measure systematically the small steps achieved by children in their learning. This would support children and families to recognise and celebrate these achievements more fully.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Taking account of additional support needs, most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy, with a few making very good progress.
- The LSP places great emphasis on supporting children to communicate effectively. All children are making good progress in developing their listening and talking skills. They are enthusiastic to talk about their learning and the activities they are working on. Most children have good listening skills and are developing their skills in turn taking. Most listen carefully to their peers and staff during class and unstructured times. Children are building their confidence in being able to read texts, sequence a story and answer questions about what they have read. Children are writing for a range of purposes and their work is celebrated through being exhibited across Room 28 and the wider school. Children would benefit from an increased number of learning activities across the curriculum which strengthen further their mark making and writing skills.
- Within their individual bespoke learning programmes, children are developing successfully their numeracy skills often within real-life contexts. For example, some children are strengthening their use of a range of times tables to perform multiplications. Others are identifying accurately the value of coins to calculate the cost of a group of common things they might purchase. All children are performing well in developing their use of positional language and concepts of movement, position, strength, speed and direction.

Attainment over time

- Whilst staff cannot yet demonstrate an accurate record of increasing attainment over time, the LSP is clearly having a positive impact on all children's progress and attainment. Individual children's reports illustrate well that all are making progress with their learning, communication skills, engagement and wellbeing. A minority of children have made significant progress from their prior levels of attainment upon being placed in Room 28 for their learning. However, the assessment and tracking of children's progress over time needs to be strengthened. Better use could be made in tracking children's progress with their individual targets and personal achievements.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated effectively in Room 28 and across the whole school. Commendably, children shared their achievements in overcoming the challenges of DLD at a whole-school assembly attended by their peers and parents.

Equity for all learners

- A number of children return successfully to mainstream education following placement at the LSP. Often, children continue to share their progress and achievements with Room 28 staff given the strong bond they built within the LSP. Senior leaders and staff should monitor more closely how well all children continue to attain and progress upon returning to their mainstream school.

Other relevant evidence

- The school provides children with two hours of physical education per week. Senior leaders should monitor the quality of this provision to evaluate the quality of the learning experiences and ensure it builds upon prior learning.
- The school has a small library area. Staff should consider how the use of the library could support better children's learning experiences 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.