

# Summarised inspection findings

**Newtyle Primary School**

Angus Council

6 December 2022

## Key contextual information

Newtyle Primary School and Nursery Class is situated in the rural village of Newtyle in Blairgowrie. There are 68 children on the school roll and 8 children attend the nursery. The headteacher has a shared headship with Airlie Primary School and Nursery Class. Almost all children attending the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 5 to 7.

In the last few years, the headteacher and staff team have had to deal with significant challenges. These include the impact of the pandemic and substantial staff changes and absences. The headteacher and principal teacher have had to cover staff absences to minimise disruptions to children's learning. In addition, the principal teacher spent all of last year covering a class in the partner school. These challenges have had a detrimental impact on the pace of change. This session there is a more stable staff team in place and the principal teacher no longer has a full time teaching commitment. The school is also benefitting from an additional class teacher and an increase in support for learning time.

### 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

- A few years ago, staff worked alongside children and stakeholders to create the school's vision, values and aims. The school's values of honesty, respect, determination, curiosity and belonging are evident across the school. Staff refer to them routinely throughout the day, which is helping children to have a greater understanding of them. Staff help to embed the values further by including them as part of school assemblies and learning conversations. Children are very proud of their school and can articulate the school values well. This session, as a result of the of the pandemic, the headteacher plans to review the current vision and values to ensure they are still relevant. He also plans to review and refine the school aims to makes them more accessible to stakeholders.
- Across the school, the supportive and welcoming ethos is a strong feature. Staff have fostered very positive relationships with children. The school roll is small which helps to create a strong sense of community. Staff know children and their personal circumstances very well. The school is regarded as an important part of the local community. To raise further the school's profile, it will be important that staff continue to share and celebrate the school's successes with the wider community. The headteacher plans to refresh the school website as part of this work.
- Staff have prioritised supporting children to work and play together more harmoniously. This is due, to the impact the pandemic has had on children's relationships with each other. There is clear evidence that the approaches staff have used have been successful. They have also encouraged children to show more positive attitudes to learning, which is evident in classes.

- The headteacher acknowledges that recent challenges, as result of the pandemic and substantial staff absences, have impacted significantly on the pace of change. Over the last year, there have also been significant changes to the staff team in the school and nursery class. The headteacher has a vision for improvement, which he is sharing with the staff team. Staff are aware that children should be attaining and achieving more highly. With a stable staff team now in place, the headteacher and staff feel more confident and equipped to take forward key areas to improve outcomes for children. This session, the local authority has provided the school with an additional class teacher. As a result, the headteacher has been able to re-configure classes to better meet the needs of different cohorts of children. There is evidence that this is having a positive impact on specific individuals and groups of learners. The local authority has also increased the school's access to a support for learning teacher. This is having a positive impact on children who require additional support with their learning. In addition, teachers and the wider staff team are benefitting from the guidance and support they receive from the support for learning teacher.
- The headteacher sets a very positive tone and, along with the staff, has helped to create an inclusive climate for learning. He engages well with staff to involve them in school improvement. Staff are encouraged and supported to take on leadership roles to promote school improvement, for example, leading staff sessions on approaches to assessment. Staff appreciate how their views and ideas are valued. Alongside the senior leadership team (SLT), they identified key improvement priorities to take forward this session. This includes the need to improve children's reading and writing skills. Staff are working together to develop greater consistency in the way they teach writing. There are early indications that this is beginning to have a positive impact on children's progress. Staff are also establishing more consistent approaches to teaching reading. There is a need for the SLT to monitor carefully the impact of new approaches and ensure staff use these consistently in all classes.
- Staff engage well in professional learning opportunities. They report that they are encouraged to develop further their own particular areas of interest, for example, assessment and outdoor learning. The principal teacher is undertaking the Into Headship qualification. As part of this, a group of staff have undertaken professional enquiry projects, which enable them to reflect on approaches to improving aspects of writing. Staff have used their findings from these small-scale research projects to make changes to the ways they teach aspects of writing.
- Staff benefit from working with colleagues in their partnership school. They value the opportunities this presents to work with a stage partner. This partnership is enabling staff to identify and begin to share good practice. Importantly, it also allows staff opportunities to work together to increase their understanding of achievement of a level.
- The headteacher has put robust processes in place to track learners' progress. The SLT engage regularly with staff to review the data, to check how well children are progressing in their learning. They use assessment information to identify individuals and groups of learners who require more support with their learning. Staff are increasing their understanding of how to use the data they gather. As planned, it will be important for staff to develop further their use of data to ensure all children achieve as highly as possible.
- The SLT has established a quality assurance calendar to coordinate the range of approaches used to evaluate the work of the school. They undertake regular meetings with staff to review children's progress and discuss the impact of targeted and universal interventions. There is a need for the SLT to undertake focused and regular class observations to support greater consistency in learning and teaching. This should also include regular monitoring of children's work. The principal teacher is no longer covering a long-term absence in the partner school and is able to now spend more time in Newtyle Primary. As such, it will be important that she

develops a more active role in quality assurance. It is also important that the roles and remits of the headteacher and principal teacher are clearly defined.

- Staff provide children with a few ways to inform and shape school improvement, for example, as part of pupil focus groups and learning conversations. There is great scope to develop this further. Staff are in the process of re-establishing the pupil leadership groups, which have been successful in the past. A minority of children are unsure if staff consult them about school improvement. Staff should make the process of consultation and the subsequent actions taken more explicit to children. Children are proud of their school and achievements. They respond very well to the school house system, which was established many years ago and is celebrated within the wider school community. The SLT consult with children to gather their views about their experiences. They do this through pupil focus groups and learning walks. Children are keen to improve their school and, with support, could use How good is OUR school? to take this forward.
- The headteacher and staff have a good understanding of the school's social, economic and cultural context. They are aware of the challenges families are currently facing as a result of the pandemic and the rising cost of living crisis. Staff have a good understanding of the school's poverty-related attainment gap. The headteacher has a strategic plan for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to target support for individuals and groups of learners. There is evidence that this is supporting children well and helping to reduce the attainment gap for specific children.

## 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

- The headteacher and staff have created a nurturing and supportive ethos and relationships between staff and children are very positive. Children are eager to learn and the majority engage well in their learning. When staff match the learning well to the needs of the children, almost all are motivated and work well independently and collaboratively. At times, the pace of learning can be too slow. Staff should increase the pace of learning and the level of challenge to ensure sustained engagement and focus for all learners. Children respond well to the opportunities they have to work in pairs and groups. They would benefit from greater opportunities for personalisation and choice in their learning.
- Across all classes, children and staff discuss the school values and in the majority of lessons, these are linked to learning. In most lessons, staff share the purpose of learning and ways in which children can be successful. In a few classes, children and teachers work together to create learning targets. Staff should continue to support children to have a greater understanding of their own specific targets to enable them to reflect on their progress. In most classes, staff's explanations and instructions are clear. However, these are not linked well enough to the purpose of learning. There is scope for staff to promote further the language of learning to help children understand what they are learning and why.
- In a few lessons, children use digital technology to support their learning, for example, as they research different animals as part of an art lesson. There is potential to develop children's digital skills more consistently across the school.
- Across the school, staff have created bright, attractive and well-organised learning environments. These include communal areas such as the school library, which children use well to increase their interest in books. The school has also recently set up a learning library for children and parents to use. Staff are beginning to make better use of the exciting and natural outdoor area. For example, staff supported children's understanding of fractions well using natural materials in the outdoor space. Staff make good use of the wooded area to promote younger children's understanding of the natural world and the changing seasons as part of their 'Weekly Wednesday Wellies' expeditions.
- In a few classes, staff are introducing play-based learning approaches to support learning across the curriculum. This is at an early stage of development. To support this further, staff should engage with national guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me, to develop the quality of experiences, spaces and interactions. In doing so, it will be beneficial for staff to establish ways for children to learn together across the nursery class and P1.
- In the majority of classes, staff use oral and written feedback to support children in their learning. Staff should review how they can increase, and be more consistent in, the use of

formative assessment strategies to support children to make the best possible progress. Staff use plenary sessions effectively to check children's understanding and make links to what children are learning.

- Following periods of remote learning due to the pandemic, staff introduced 'soft start learning sessions' at the beginning of the day. In a few classes, the majority of children respond well to the activities and challenges they engage in as part of these. As recognised by the headteacher, there is a need for staff to review the value and benefit of these, now that children have settled back into school.
- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches, including standardised assessments and local authority materials, to measure children's progress within literacy and numeracy. They gather samples of children's work throughout the year to help inform these decisions. A stronger focus is now required on assessment of children's progress, based on teacher judgement, and on the use of National Benchmarks and moderation. The school staff have identified the need to focus on moderation as part of school improvement, with an initial focus on writing.
- Across the school, staff create an annual overview of key learning, which is then planned in more detail on a termly basis. This is focused on the four contexts for learning. Targeted experiences and outcomes are identified across interdisciplinary learning (IDL) and discrete subjects. Teachers' planning does not indicate how learning will be differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Staff use a range of progressive pathways to deliver the curriculum. These are not used consistently by staff to support short and long term planning across classes. Staff should review approaches to ensure progression in learning is clear for all children. There is also a need for staff to have a shared understanding of how the four contexts for learning are being developed across the school.
- The headteacher and staff track carefully the progress of groups of learners, including those who are most affected by poverty. They use assessment data to plan targeted interventions to address identified needs. Staff participate in termly planning and attainment meetings with the headteacher. Written feedback is provided by the headteacher, detailing the discussions that have taken place. However, areas for improvement and next steps should be identified more clearly for staff, in order to support improvement.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have progressive pathways in place for the majority of areas of the curriculum. They have also developed a three-year rolling programme to support annual planning for a few areas of the curriculum. Staff now need to develop progression pathways for all curriculum areas. This will help them to ensure planned experiences build on children's prior learning and skills and supports progression for all children. In addition, staff need also to review the balance of the entire curriculum, to ensure that children receive their full entitlement.
- Staff plan opportunities for children to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across different areas of the curriculum as part of IDL. It is not clear the extent to which this is ensuring that children have well-planned opportunities to apply their prior learning. Staff need to have a shared understanding of high quality IDL and what this looks like in practice..
- Staff are beginning to plan outdoor learning experiences for children. The school has immediate access to a delightful, natural outdoor area. Staff are keen to make more effective use of the outdoor space. They have recently undertaken professional learning to support them to make better use of the space to promote learning across the curriculum.
- Children have a few opportunities to explore the world of work. Children at the early level have positive opportunities to hear about different roles in the community, including police officers and fire fighters. Staff should make use of local and national guidance, including the Career Education Standard (3-18) to access a progression skills framework to ensure children are developing skills for learning, life and work.
- Staff have developed a detailed annual plan to support children as they move from the nursery class into P1. Children in P1 have settled well into school. Children moving to S1 are supported well to make successful transitions. Staff organise different events for children to come together from different rural schools in the Kirriemuir cluster.
- Not all children are receiving their full entitlement to two hours of high-quality physical education per week. Staff should take action to address this.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Led by the headteacher, the school adapted approaches to engage with families during periods of remote learning. This included the use of a digital platform and the use of emails, as well as real-time learning opportunities and weekly challenges. Since the return to school, the school recognises the opportunity to continue engaging with parents through digital platforms. However, there is a need for consistency to ensure its success.
- Staff have reinstated opportunities for parents to be in school this session, including termly drop-ins and opportunities to visit children's classes and meet their teachers. They have gathered parental feedback through a 'you said, we listened' board in the school reception area. Staff should continue to explore ways to gather feedback from parents and demonstrate this is acted upon.
- The Parent Council impacts positively on the wider life of the school. This has included supporting opportunities for children and families to engage in wider community events and activities, including visits to the pantomime and a Hallowe'en walk.
- From the questionnaires returned, the majority of parents report that they believe the school organises activities for children and parents to learn together.
- The headteacher has identified opportunities that have encouraged parents and partners to be involved in leading learning and enhancing the curriculum. As identified by the headteacher, there is scope to increase these opportunities, which would support the development of children's understanding of the world of work.



## 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

- Staff are committed to providing a nurturing learning environment for all children at Newtyle Primary School. Relationships across the school are very positive.
- Across the school, staff use wellbeing indicators with children to help them evaluate how well the school is supporting them to feel safe and lead a healthy lifestyle. Children complete wellbeing webs twice per year and teachers collect and review the results part of the school's tracking data. Staff follow up any areas of concern as appropriate. A few children have more regular planned 'check ins' to support their emotional wellbeing. Helpfully, staff have implemented a more accessible version of the wellbeing web for the younger children. Staff should continue to support children more regularly making the connection between the wellbeing indicators and their school experience. This would allow children to understand their own progress in wellbeing. In P1, daily 'check ins' are part of the classroom routine, providing children with the opportunity to share their emotions. This builds on the good practice which practitioners established in the nursery. Staff should consider implementing a whole school approach for daily 'check ins'.
- Almost all children report that they feel safe in school and that they have someone they can speak to if they are upset or worried. All children report that the school helps them to understand and respect other people.
- Staff have focused strongly on children's mental and emotional wellbeing across all classes. These approaches are supporting children to engage more positively in learning and with each other. Staff have planned universal and targeted approaches to support children across a range of needs. Alongside a review of planning for progression in other curricular areas, staff should ensure that they plan across all areas of the health and wellbeing curriculum. Plans should also take account of the four contexts for learning and individual pupils' needs.
- The whole school community knows the school's values and staff use them well to promote their importance and support positive relationships. Demonstrating the values is a strong feature of celebrating children's wider achievements across the school and within classes. Staff celebrate these within weekly assemblies and children who have embodied these have the opportunity to celebrate at a get together with the headteacher.
- Staff have recently begun to engage with Children's Rights and related articles. Class charters are displayed in classes but children are not yet able to identify how they relate to their rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Staff recognise the need to review and refresh the school's promoting behaviour policy. In doing so, staff should align with the focused work on promoting children's rights and

embedding the UNCRC. A minority of parents reported they did not feel comfortable approaching the school with questions. A few parents believe the school does not deal well with bullying. Going forward, it will be important that staff consult all parents as part of the review of the school's promoting behaviour policy.

- The headteacher has put in place effective approaches to monitoring attendance and punctuality. Staff know the children and families well and are sensitive to their needs. This allows staff to identify barriers to attendance quickly and to offer support when appropriate.
- Overall, the school has effective procedures in place to identify and support children with additional support needs. The support for learning teacher supports teachers and wider staff to plan and implement identified support strategies. Her allocation of time at the school this session has increased which has allowed a greater focus on support across the school in each of her identified roles. Staff have put in place pupil profiles and individualised plans for children who require them. Teachers, in consultation with the support for learning teacher, review these on a regular basis. As planned, there is scope to improve the quality of targets within individual education plans this session.
- Newtyle Primary is an inclusive school where staff foster positive relationships across the whole school community. Staff encourage children to show support and empathy towards others. The headteacher works with staff to ensure the range of support offered to the children and families helps to ensure equality for all. This includes support to minimise the cost of the school day. The headteacher tracks and monitors the progress of specific cohorts of children who may require targeted support. There is a need for staff to increase the opportunities children have to understand, value and celebrate aspects of diversity and challenge discrimination.
- The local authority submitted self-evaluation information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties, as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school health promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

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

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and the majority of children are making satisfactory progress from previous levels of attainment. A minority of children are making good and very good progress. The majority of children with additional support needs are making good progress towards their individual targets in learning.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- At early level, children enjoy listening to stories and singing familiar songs. A few children listen well to each other as they play. At first level, the majority of children take turns appropriately during class and group discussions. Children at second level can describe a few of the features required when presenting to their peers. They can also identify what makes a respectful audience. Most children across the school contribute enthusiastically and are keen to answer questions in class.

### Reading

- At the early level, children are developing their knowledge of initial sounds. A few children can read some common words. At first level, the majority of children are using their knowledge of words to decode unfamiliar words. With prompting, children at first and second levels identify their favourite authors and give explanations to justify their choice. At the end of first level, the majority of children read with appropriate expression to demonstrate understanding. At first and second levels the majority of children are not confident in responding to inferential and evaluative questions. At second level, children are not yet able to describe techniques used by an author to engage a reader.

### Writing

- At early level, children are learning to form letters correctly. They attempt to write as they engage in imaginative play. By the end of first level, children write for different purposes and confidently identify features of a few genres, such as imaginative and personal writing. As children approach the end of second level, they use paragraphs within extended pieces of writing. They use a range of punctuation in their writing. There is great scope to improve children's writing across the school and their understanding of different genres. As part of this, teachers must have higher expectations of how children present their writing.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- At the early level, most children can order numbers 0 to 10 correctly. A few children are not yet able to recognise numbers consistently. By the end of first level, a minority of children are making good progress with their knowledge of number. Towards the end of second level, most children can round numbers to 10,000. They have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to 100,000. Most children at second level are confident in estimating the lengths of familiar objects. They are less confident in estimating different weights. The majority of children at first and second levels add and subtract confidently. They are not as confident in recalling multiplication facts. Across first and second levels, children demonstrate a good understanding of money for their age and stage. Children working towards the end of second level identify simple fractions and use this knowledge to solve problems. They have difficulty recalling prior learning using percentages.

## Shape, position and movement

- At first and second levels, the majority of children can identify a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are less confident in describing the properties of three-dimensional objects. Children working towards the end of second level use appropriate mathematical language to identify and describe acute, right and obtuse angles.

## Information Handling

- There is evidence of children at first and second levels using different ways to display information, for example, bar graphs and Carroll diagrams. There is scope for children to make more consistent use of digital technology to record and display information.

## Attainment over time

- The impact of the pandemic and significant staff absence last session have had a notable impact on children's attainment. In particular, for those children working at the end of first level and the start of second level. Staff are taking steps to address this. This includes developing new approaches to the teaching of writing and reading. There is significant need to increase the pace of learning. In addition, staff need to develop further their understanding of achievement of a level to enable them to make more robust judgements of children's progress.
- The headteacher has developed approaches to track and monitor children's progress across literacy and numeracy. As a result, staff have a better understanding of children's attainment. The data gathered is based on a range of assessment information which includes standardised class and summative assessments. The data demonstrates that most children are making progress over time across literacy and numeracy. With increased pace and challenge in their learning, children are capable of achieving more across their learning.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- A group of children in P6 and P7 have achieved their John Muir Discovery Award. Children are very proud of this achievement. Across the school, children's achievements, within and out with school are celebrated. Staff have established a successful system, which encourages parents to share regularly their children's achievements from home. Children respond well to the opportunities they have to share their personal achievements at school assemblies. Staff use different methods to share children's successes with parents, for example, newsletters and digital platforms. Staff need to now ensure this is a regular practice in all classes. Staff track children's achievements well and ensure that no child is at risk of missing out. They deliver and work with partners to offer different and activities. The headteacher tracks children's achievements and takes steps to ensure all children have opportunities to enjoy success. Staff

should now support children to have a greater understanding of the skills they are developing as part of their achievements.

### **Equity for all learners**

- The headteacher and staff have a good understanding of the social, economic and cultural background of children. They have developed approaches to track and monitor the attainment and achievement of all children, including those who are care experienced or disadvantaged by poverty. They have prioritised the use of PEF to ensure children have equality in experiences. As a result of different interventions which promote children's emotional wellbeing, a few children supported by PEF are more engaged in their learning. Staff understand the impact of the pandemic and the rising cost of living affecting their families. They fund different trips and activities to ensure no child is at risk of missing out.

## 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.