

Summarised inspection findings

Lochaline Primary School

The Highland Council

19 March 2019

Key contextual information

Lochaline Primary is a small school that serves the village of Lochaline and the surrounding rural area on the Ardnamurchan peninsula. At the time of the inspection, there were 19 children on the roll. They are taught in two multi-stage composite classes, P1-3 and P4-7.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

excellent

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

- Lochaline Primary is a nurturing and caring school where children thrive. The warm, purposeful ethos results in a safe, positive and highly engaging learning environment for all children. Relationships between children and staff are wholly positive. As a result, children at all stages are highly motivated and fully engaged in their learning. Children are exceptionally well mannered, kind and courteous to each other in classes and around the school. The headteacher has children's best interests at the heart of all decision-making. He deploys teaching and non-teaching staff with great care and consideration, taking full account of the strengths and talents of the staff team. Commendably, this flexible approach to organising learning ensures continuity for children and the highest possible standards of teaching across the school.
- Children feel that staff know them very well as individuals. They appreciate that teachers have high expectations for them and encourage them to do their best. They feel that they are very well supported by adults, as and when necessary, to ensure they are ready to learn and achieve. Children respond, often in a mature and considered way, by making the most of the dynamic and highly relevant learning experiences that are planned for them. Children appreciate the opportunity to be involved in setting their own personal learning targets that apply across a range of curricular areas. Through this successful approach, staff are providing learners with clear direction on how to improve. This also provides teachers with further evidence in their judgement of progress thorough a Curriculum for Excellence level.
- In all lessons observed during the inspection, children experienced the right balance of challenge and support in their learning. Teachers skilfully plan lessons across the multi-composite classes to ensure that tasks and activities are differentiated to meet the differing needs and aptitudes of all children. Staff consistently share the purpose of lessons with children. Teachers' timely interventions help to consolidate and move learning forward for children during the course of lessons. Across the curriculum, lessons are briskly paced, with time for teaching and learning maximised.
- Across the school, standards of teaching are excellent. There are many opportunities for children to work collaboratively in pairs, trios or small groups. The tasks that teachers set are carefully planned, highly relevant and exciting for children. Teachers are skilled in linking

learning through successful interdisciplinary themes and real-life situations. Children enjoy responding to challenges and open-ended tasks, and are highly motivated by such activities. Support staff play a central role to allow effective flexibility in learning across the stages. This helps to ensure learning is accessible to all learners. They provide valuable support for groups and individuals, for example in helping children to develop confidence and fluency in reading aloud.

- Teachers and children make frequent use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching. Teachers skilfully plan children's learning in a variety of environments, ensuring learning is always interactive and engaging. This includes learning outdoors, where children regularly experience high quality, well-planned learning experiences to develop and apply their skills in different contexts. This keeps children motivated in their learning and meaningfully involved in their community. These worthwhile activities also promote creativity in learning.
- Teachers are highly skilled in the use of assessment as an integral part of learning and teaching. They use a range of assessments, including standardised assessments, to monitor children's progress and to plan next steps for individuals and groups. Commendably, this includes a holistic approach to assessing children's application of learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. The headteacher and staff make time to discuss regularly the progress of all children. They analyse the range of assessment evidence available to them, and plan any required interventions to ensure all children are making the best possible progress. Staff use national benchmarks, along with helpful progression pathways from The Highland Council, to ensure that curriculum programmes, including for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing, build on children's prior learning as they move through the school. Staff should continue to engage with colleagues in the secondary school to develop an understanding of what learning looks like beyond second level in key curricular areas. This will help them to develop further challenge for those children who are exploring aspects of third level in their learning. This will also allow high attaining children to continue to learn at a brisk pace and be challenged in their learning into S1.
- Staff engage in regular, planned opportunities to engage in moderation activity within the school. They appreciate opportunities to collaborate and share best practice with other local schools within the cluster. This helps to ensure their judgement of Curriculum for Excellence levels is robust. They could consider seeking opportunities to engage in moderation more widely with colleagues beyond the cluster wherever possible. This will allow staff to develop a national perspective of standards and expectations.
- Thorough arrangements for transition between the stages are in place. This is helped by the regular, close working and planning by teachers across both classes. Teachers work well with colleagues from local secondary schools to plan transition activities to ensure a smooth progression from P7 to S1. Built into this transition planning are earlier opportunities for children who require an earlier, enhanced transition programme, to build their confidence and ensure any necessary support is arranged prior to starting S1. Children moving from nursery to P1 are particularly well supported. Their weekly transition experience throughout the year in the P1-3 class adds much value to their learning and development.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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 each cohort in this school is fewer than ten, statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children.
- Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in listening, talking, reading, writing and numeracy. Children who require additional support with their learning are supported very well to make the best possible progress. The school is able to demonstrate that children who require additional help with learning make strong progress from prior levels. At all stages of the school, a few children are exceeding national expectations for reading and writing, or for numeracy and mathematics.

Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English is very good. Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in reading, writing, listening and talking. All children are on track to achieve or exceed appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels by the end of the current session.

Listening and talking

- Almost all children speak to adults, and to each other, confidently and articulately. They are skilled at taking turns and responding appropriately to prompts and information, especially by the end of first level and into second level. As they progress through the stages, children are developing their ability to listen during class discussions. Almost all can offer their opinions and views succinctly and ask pertinent questions. Teachers provide regular opportunities for children to provide critical feedback to their peers, for example, in evaluating group improvisation performances in drama. By the end of first level and into second level, almost all children can identify the purpose of spoken texts and respond appropriately. As children progress through the school, they develop their skills in talking to an audience and presenting information. From P1 onwards, children give class talks in order to develop further their confidence in presenting to peers and a variety of audiences.

Reading

- Children are encouraged to develop a love of reading. Almost all children can talk confidently about books they are reading and what kinds of books they enjoy. From P1 onwards, they write critical book reviews and share their views on texts with others. All children at the early stages are using a range of strategies successfully to read unfamiliar words with confidence. They are developing their reading skills through developing their phonological awareness. They demonstrate a firm grasp of sounds, letters and patterns to access a variety of common words with growing confidence. This is empowering children to enjoy and understand a range of reading sources. Through a targeted, thorough approach, children benefit from daily

opportunities to read aloud to adults or their peers. This is having a positive impact on their understanding and application of punctuation, fluency and expression. As they progress in their learning, children are developing their understanding and application of a range of literary techniques. For example by the end of first level, almost all children can identify key ideas of a text; can skim and scan for specific information; and distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. By the end of first level and into second level, almost all children can understand apply techniques such as similes, metaphors and imagery into their own writing, from a range of reading stimuli.

Writing

- At the early stages, all children write regularly for a variety of purposes, for example, in imaginary and real-life contexts. They can apply rules from literary techniques they have learnt to improve the accuracy of their spelling. All children at the early stages are beginning to apply skills in the use of basic punctuation in order to structure their writing. A few high achieving children at the early stages can produce extended pieces of writing, with exceptional aptitude. As they progress through first level, all children develop skills in using a wider range of punctuation and structures to develop the maturity of their writing. They apply these rules in writing for a wide range of purposes, such as letters, plays and poems. This is frequently linked to their topic work or other relevant contexts. By the end of first level, almost all children are developing skills to write more extended pieces in imaginative writing. They use varied sentence structures and literary techniques acquired from their personal reading, to engage their audience. By the end of first level, most children can successfully organise their writing in paragraphs; can start sentences in a variety of ways; and write for a range of purposes. By the end of first level and into second level, almost all children can create mature texts for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting appropriate genre. Teachers' skilled use of drama provides lively opportunities for children to explore discuss and experience abstract and complex genres and settings. Children's initial creative response through drama provides a personalised stimulus for children to write. Many children produce stories and texts of a very high standard following such drama lessons.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. All children are on track to achieve or exceed appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels by the end of the current session.

Number, money and measurement

- At the early stages, all children demonstrate a very good understanding of number. They can order numbers beyond 30, easily identifying missing numbers. They can add and subtract numbers to 20. They are able to identify halves. Using money through play, they demonstrate a sound knowledge of the value of different coins, up to £2. By the end of first level, children display a very good knowledge of number. Their mental agility is developing very well. By the end of first level, all children can manipulate numbers well to double and to round to the nearest 100. They can add, subtract, multiply and divide at an appropriate level. They are able to undertake addition of different amounts of money. They can identify simple fractions such as a half and a quarter and can explain equivalence. A few high achieving children at this stage have an exceptional aptitude for numeracy, and can, for example, perform mental calculations involving negative numbers. At the first level, and into second level, children have a very good understanding of probability and chance in context. For example, from an on-line weather forecast, they can accurately assess the probability or certainty of snow.
- At the second level, almost all children are making very good progress. A few are ready and able to access third level learning. They use their knowledge of multiplication tables well to undertake both multiplication and division sums. Almost all are able to round numbers beyond

10,000 and round decimal numbers to one place. Almost all at second level demonstrate a very good understanding of common and decimal fractions and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early stages, children demonstrate a very good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At the end of first and at second level, children can identify a wide range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using specific vocabulary to describe the different properties. All children demonstrate a very strong knowledge of compass points and bearings. Through the context of analysing local weather charts, they apply their knowledge of position to interpret the wind direction and subsequent expected weather conditions.

Information handling

- At the early stages, all children can display and interpret simple data. They create pictograms to display information they have gathered. At first level and second level, all children can display data in different and appropriate ways. They use data they have found through researching the numbers of casualties during WW2 to produce graphs to show their findings. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the need for appropriate scale, and can use laptops to create their graphs by creating a spreadsheet.

Time

- At the early stages, all children are able to recognise o'clock and half past on an analogue clock. They can say the days of the week in sequence and identify different seasons. By the end of the first level, most have a good understanding of days of week, months of the year and seasons. They are able to recognise, o'clock, half past and quarter to/past. By the second level, all children can record time in both 12 hour and 24-hour notation.

Attainment over time

- The school shared a thorough and accurate picture of children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. As a result of the robust approaches to assessment and teachers' skilled use of data, the school can demonstrate very good progress over time for almost all children, both in terms of their learning and personal and social development. This provides teachers with a clear picture of children's progress as they move through the school. Staff appreciate opportunities to engage in moderation work within and out with the school. Together, they have worked conscientiously to develop confidence in using national benchmarks to verify their professional judgements.
- Over his many years in post, the headteacher has developed robust approaches for tracking children's attainment and achievement. This is informed by teachers' sound assessment practices and analytical use of all available data. Children's attainment is continuously reviewed throughout the year to ensure appropriate challenge and support is in place. Interventions are carefully planned to support all children to make the best possible progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Staff across the school are committed to ensuring that all children have opportunities to participate in clubs and activities. Children's achievements within and outwith school are carefully recorded and tracked. Staff take action to ensure that no child misses out. Children are rightly very proud of their school and of their significant achievements. For example, individually in cross-country running and swimming; and together, in regularly securing first place at Mods for their Gaelic singing.

Equity for all

- There is a clear commitment of all staff to ensuring children at Lochaline Primary School have equitable experiences. Due to the rural context where many children have to travel to school by transport, teachers organise lunchtime clubs. This allows all children to have the opportunity to access a range of extra-curricular learning opportunities. Staff make the most of the unique local environment to provide all children with highly relevant and exciting contexts for learning. Targeted interventions are in place to support children with additional needs to make the best possible progress. Staff provide sensitive support to children and families who may be experiencing particular challenges. The Pupil Equity Fund is used to very good effect to provide extra support to ensure high attainment in literacy at the early stages. This includes providing new resources. The impact of the use of this funding is routinely monitored and evaluated by staff and the headteacher. They can demonstrate that children's attainment in literacy has improved as a result.

Other relevant evidence

- The curriculum rationale is based firmly on the unique rural context and setting of the school. By P7, children have an outstanding general knowledge. Their geographical, historical and scientific knowledge of their local area and place in world is continuously reinforced and enhanced by teachers through topical, real-life contexts.
- With the school being co-located with the local fire station, all children by P7 learn valuable life-saving skills, and the importance of being a first responder. All children are trained regularly in CPR and many attend the extra-curricular 'Save a Life Club', where they learn additional First Aid skills.
- From P1 onwards, children learn French and Gaelic. By P7, they can confidently listen for instructions, read text, use every day vocabulary, and hold simple conversations in both languages.
- Children's skills in the expressive arts are impressive. They produce line drawings and paintings with great detail. In drama, they work collaboratively to create improvised sketches, write plays, and perform to the local community in shows. Many children excel in individual sports and physical activities, including at local inter-schools competitions. All children from P4 to P7 participate in the Gaelic choir. Commendably, they routinely gain first place at local Mods.
- Children's understanding of empathy, inclusion, diversity and equality is very well developed. They naturally ask questions and consider complex ethical issues from another's point of view.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The outstanding approaches to learning and teaching. Open-ended tasks and challenges are planned within exciting and relevant interdisciplinary contexts. This allows children to apply and extend their skills and knowledge, collaborate in different grouping, and develop their creativity and curiosity.
- The robust approaches to assessing children's progress in learning and personal development, and analytical use of data and assessment information. This ensures that every child makes the best possible progress.
- Ways in which the talents and skills of all staff, parents and the wider community are utilised to ensure that children's experiences are joyous and purposeful.
- The child-centred approach to all decision-making. At Lochaline Primary School, children come first.

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.