

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Peter's RC Primary School**

Moray Council

21 February 2023

## Key contextual information

St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in the town of Buckie, Moray. A majority of children at the school attend through the placing requests process. One hundred and eleven children are on the school roll. Children are educated across five composite classes. A majority of children attending the school live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zone five. Approximately 30% of children are registered for free school meals, which is above the national average.

At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher in post was replacing the previous acting headteacher who was appointed in October 2020. Recruitment of a Catholic headteacher is ongoing for the local authority. The headteacher's post remains temporary until a new headteacher is appointed.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

weak

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

- At the point of inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for five weeks. The acting headteacher is a well-respected and trusted member of the school community. A commitment to the school community and improving outcomes for children across the school is evident. There is a strong understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community. This is due to their long-standing teaching role within the school.
- In session 2020/2021, leaders in the school revisited the school values and returned to a previous set of school values of; faith, hope, love, respect and honesty. The school vision of 'Together Everyone Achieves More' remained unchanged. The acting headteacher discusses vision and values with children during assemblies. All classes have their own individual class charter, developed by teachers and children. The focus on the class charter is the regular reference point in most classrooms. Children's focus on class charters reduces the focus on the school vision and values. Therefore, children are not clear on and how the vision and values underpin the life and work of the school. Moving forward, staff should consider how they support children to understand better the vision and values.
- Due to the changes in leadership, quality assurance arrangements are not undertaken as regularly as planned. A local authority primary advisor continues to work with the acting headteacher and contributes to important evaluation activities. A local authority learning and teaching officer supports the acting headteacher in identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All staff across the school now need to develop an understanding of how to use data and information accurately to inform better their approaches to learning and teaching. The acting headteacher should support staff to identify clear targets to develop further their learning and teaching. This will contribute to current improvement priorities and help staff reflect on the quality of their learning and teaching.

- Improvement plans are beginning to align better to evidence-based priorities. Staff should now include evidence of how they know identified priorities are leading to improvement. This should include measurable outcomes and timescales relating to children's overall progress. The acting headteacher should now ensure that they demonstrate how improvement helps reduce the poverty-related attainment gap. In developing improvement planning further, the acting headteacher should take full consideration of the views of children, parents and appropriate partners. This should include exploring ways to engage meaningfully parents in evaluating the work of the school.
- Children have few opportunities to participate and contribute to improving the life and work of the school. There is a need for the acting headteacher and teachers to progress with plans to reintroduce pupil leadership opportunities. It is important that children receive support from the acting headteacher and staff to participate in self-evaluation and school improvement. This will support better children's work with staff and partners and help them take responsibility for leading aspects of self-evaluation and improvement.
- An important priority for the school is to improve the overall quality and consistency of learning, teaching and assessment. As a result, the acting headteacher is beginning to identify professional learning opportunities for teachers. All teachers recognise the need to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy across the school. Teachers would welcome the opportunity to improve practice and raise attainment through meeting the high expectations of The Moray Standard. It will be important for local authority improvement officers to support the acting headteacher to identify other schools who provide high-quality learning and teaching leading to raised attainment. This will provide teachers with opportunities to visit other schools and observe high-quality teaching and engage in professional discussions.
- The acting headteacher and staff understand the adversity and challenges faced by families because of the pandemic and cost of living. There is a need to use this knowledge, supported by analysis of data, to identify effectively gaps in children's attainment. This will support strategic planning and provide a clearer focus on raising attainment across the school. There is a need to demonstrate clearly the impact of interventions and how this closes any gaps in children's attainment.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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

- Staff work well to create positive relationships throughout the school, with respectful interactions between children and staff. As a result, classrooms are calm and friendly environments where purposeful learning could take place. Children are kind and offer support and help to each other in class and across the school.
- Most children are keen and ready to learn. They are attentive during lessons and follow instructions to complete tasks. Children are engaged and participate well in their learning when tasks and activities are matched well to their needs and interests.
- Children learn as a whole class in most classroom activities. As a result, children do not have their individual learning needs met. Teachers should review approaches to managing teaching time to support the needs of all learners. This includes the effective deployment of support staff, and differentiation of learning implemented to meet the needs of learners. Teachers need to ensure that all children experience high-quality learning activities. In too many lessons, children complete tasks that do not provide effective support and challenge. Lessons are teacher led and overly rely on resources. Overall, children do not have enough opportunities to be independent in their learning.
- Staff provide children with a few opportunities to use digital technology to consolidate recent learning in literacy and numeracy. Staff should continue to develop the use of digital technologies to enhance children's understanding of digital literacy.
- At the beginning of lessons, teachers provide clear instructions, often using text and images on whiteboards. Teachers share learning intentions and success criteria. Teachers now need to support children to co-create learning intentions. This will help children understand the purpose of their learning. It will support further children's awareness of whether or not they have achieved success. The acting headteacher and staff should work to develop a consistent language of learning across the school to support children to articulate clearly their strengths and next steps in learning.
- Teachers use questioning to check for understanding but now need to improve their questioning to deepen children's understanding of what they have learned. Staff should work on developing a range of higher-order questions to support them in their teaching approaches. Staff should consider how to improve the use of displays to provide examples of high-quality work and share expected standards with children. This includes the presentation of children's work within the classroom.
- Teachers are at the early stages of using a range of learning environments such as the outdoors and local areas to enhance learning and teaching. The local area offers rich learning

environments. Staff should maximise the school's proximity to the local community to enhance learning opportunities for children.

- Staff have taken initial steps to improve the teaching of reading and writing across the school. They have created an assessment framework for writing and have introduced a resource to support the teaching of comprehension skills. Staff should now work together to develop a fuller understanding of good practice in the teaching of reading and writing. In doing this, they should look at ways to raise the profile of reading to inspire and motivate readers. Staff now need to teach reading skills more regularly using texts appropriate to children's ability. In writing, there needs to be clearer teaching of skills for writing, across a range of genre, within more motivating contexts.
- The acting headteacher and staff should now review how they teach knowledge, understanding and skills in mathematics and numeracy. At present, activities are too reliant on a resource to deliver the learning. Staff should now teach concepts in a planned and progressive approach to the teaching of mathematics and numeracy. In doing this, they should rely less on the resource that depends on independent learning of concepts.
- Teachers use a range of resource assessments including weekly mathematics assessments and spelling assessments. The school were unable to access results from the Scottish National Survey of Achievement to inform their teaching and learning. Overall, the acting headteacher and staff need to review their approach to assessment. In doing so, they should ensure assessment of children's work informs staff judgement on children's progress through the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. It is important that staff now work together to ensure results from assessments directly influence teaching and learning. Now COVID-19 mitigations have eased, there is greater opportunity for staff to work with each other, and other schools. This will support staff to develop a shared understanding of achievement of a CfE level.
- Across the school, staff would benefit from opportunities to develop further their knowledge and skills within developmentally appropriate pedagogy. All early level staff should now take time to work with nursery practitioners to explore the national practice guidance, Realising the Ambition: Being Me. This will support early level staff improve their approach to meeting the needs of young children. In improving pedagogy, staff should focus on how they use the space well to create meaningful, motivating play experiences for all children. They should look at the role of the adult and ensure that children's experiences are of a high quality.
- All staff utilise commercial resources to plan learning and teaching. The school has sourced progression pathways for all curriculum areas. Staff would benefit from using the progression pathways to provide a more streamlined, consistent approach to planning learning, teaching and assessment. This would support them in planning for progression in learning through the CfE levels. Staff should now plan more clearly for different groups within the class to ensure they make appropriate progress in their learning.
- The acting headteacher and staff have only recently transferred from using one local authority tracker to an agreed new system which also checks on children's progress. They require more time and support to embed this system and check children's progress. Staff should work together to ensure information provided for the overall tracking of attainment is accurate. They use the analysis of data to identify children that are not on track and plan interventions for children who require support for learning. Staff should now use this data to help them have a clearer focus on raising attainment. They should ensure all supports and interventions are reviewed regularly to ensure they raise attainment for children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- All staff need to ensure learning pathways are set within a clear curriculum rationale. The rationale should reflect accurately the shared values of the school and its community, including the central values of the Catholic Church. The acting headteacher plans to reinstate links with the Church to enhance further the religious education in Roman Catholic schools' curriculum.
- Staff are using the experiences and outcomes from CfE to offer a broad general education across the school. This is at an early stage of implementation, and children do not yet access all curriculum areas on a regular basis within a progressive programme.
- The school is at the early stages of implementing progression pathways across all curriculum areas. Staff should liaise with local authority colleagues to prioritise the development of literacy and numeracy pathways. This will ensure they support all learners to build more progressively on prior learning.
- The acting headteacher and teachers should work together to develop a shared understanding of what constitutes interdisciplinary learning. In most classes, there is too great a focus on activities and tasks. It is now important for staff to link activities and tasks better to the development of knowledge and skills.
- There is a need for staff to ensure that all children experience two hours of quality physical education each week. The acting headteacher and staff should work together to review the implementation of the progression pathways to support planning, continuity, and progression in learning experiences. Teachers would benefit from professional learning to enhance their skills, knowledge, and confidence in delivering physical education.
- Staff should consider how to incorporate quality outdoor learning into their planning. This will maximise the potential of the local environment and enhance children's experiences. Outdoor learning is not a regular and progressive learning experience for children.
- Staff should review the 'alternative curriculum' on offer to ensure that it provides children with their entitlements to the broad general education.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- All staff work well to develop relationships with parents that are welcoming and inclusive. Parents value the approachable staff who provide a positive sense of community. Staff use social media platforms and newsletters to provide parents with helpful information about the school and opportunities for children and families within the local community. Staff send postcards home to parents to share successes that their child is having in school. Parents appreciate staff sending postcards to them so that they can acknowledge their child's achievements at home.
- Parents welcomed the recent return to face-to-face parents' evenings. This is supporting parent's understanding of what their child is learning in school. Parents would welcome further opportunities to visit the school to develop a deeper understanding of what their child is learning. This will support them be more supportive of their child's learning and in 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

weak

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

- A majority of children feel safe and supported in school. They benefit from supportive and respectful adults who know them well. Children speak positively of the relationships they have with each other and with staff. Teachers and support staff are aware of the needs of children. As a result, most children feel included in school life. A minority of children feel that the school does not deal with bullying well. It is important that staff develop approaches to wellbeing to ensure all children feel safe when in school.
- Children reflect on what wellbeing means to them and others during assemblies. This connects to the school values of: faith, hope, love, respect and honesty. Staff in the school provide support that helps children cope better with loss or bereavement. All children accessing this support feel the support has helped them. Overall, children would like to explore wellbeing more fully through regular class activities and as individuals. This will provide children with meaningful opportunities to reflect on their wellbeing and identify areas of strength and areas where they require support. This will support staff develop awareness the wellbeing needs of individual children.
- Prior to the pandemic, the local parish and school worked well in partnership to support children develop their Catholic faith. Positively, the church and school continued to ensure that children received support through sacramental preparations. Children are keen to re-establish the close and positive links with the local parish during the period of recovery from the pandemic. Children receive their entitlement to religious observance through regular assemblies and attendance at services in the local parish.
- Overall, staff need to improve their understanding of their responsibilities and statutory duties related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. The school's approaches to child protection, safeguarding and meeting the additional support needs requires improvement using local authority guidance, legislation and national guidance such as Getting it right for Every Child.
- The school uses individualised planning to improve outcomes for most children who require targeted support. However, a few children do not have their needs identified effectively. These children are not receiving the targeted support required to help them make sufficient progress with learning or their wellbeing.
- Staff should continue to develop approaches to individualised planning for children. This will identify better the purpose and intention of individual interventions or adaptations required to the curriculum for children with additional support needs. Approaches to individualised planning should include ways to increase participation of children and parents. Overall, staff need to evidence better children's progress in relation to individual targets. This will ensure interventions are effective and lead to improved outcomes for children.

- Children speak positively of how they learn about their emotions. In each class, children spend time developing approaches that help them reflect on and understand their emotional responses. Overall, children identify that, the school is a calmer place for them. Over a four-year period, the school evidenced a significant reduction in recorded incidents and a reduction in exclusions. This year, to date, there have been no recorded incidents or exclusions.
- Attendance across the school is an area that requires attention. A minority of children have attendance rates below 90%, since August 2022. It is important that the school takes steps to improve attendance and reduce late coming across the school.
- Across the school, a majority of children feel that staff listen to them and respect their rights. Children are able to link the class charter to their rights and identify how this impacts positively on the class environment. The school has achieved The Rights Respecting School Silver Award. Children in the upper stages demonstrate an understanding of their rights. They are developing their awareness of global issues through initiatives such as the Crisp Packet Project and other charity events.
- Children are proud of their achievements and feel ready to take on more leadership roles and opportunities. A minority of children identified that they have previously been part of leadership groups and this supported them feel valued within the school. Children identified a range of groups that they would like to see reintroduced or newly created. Identified groups include; pupil council, a pupil improvement group, a sports opportunities group, and children's rights groups. Increasing opportunities for children to influence and lead in school life will help them develop skills to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. The acting headteacher acknowledges the need for prompt action to ensure that children exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school and wider community.
- The school works in partnership with active schools coordinators to provide access to clubs within the community. This is supporting children who would otherwise be unable to attend clubs participate in activities beyond the school day. Staff should now work with partners to track children's participation. The school runs a free breakfast club that is accessible for all children. Staff have worked well with local shops to donate food for breakfast. This universal approach is providing opportunities for children to access an appropriate breakfast and start their day positively. It is important for staff to monitor, evaluate and evidence whether targeted children are attending breakfast club and how this impacts on their wellbeing. It will provide useful information that can be used to measure outcomes related to whether a positive start to the school day is improving school attendance and reducing late coming.

### 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'
- equity for all learners

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is weak. A few children across the school are making good progress but could be achieving more. Staff now need to provide reliable information on children's progress, including those with additional support needs.

#### Listening and talking

- Most children listen well during classroom activities. Across the school, children need more opportunities to develop their skills of talking in groups and explaining their thinking to others. At early level, most children take turns during class discussions. They should continue to build their communication skills and expand their vocabulary. At first and second level, children build on the opinions and views of others during group work. Children are unable to talk confidently about the skills required to speak to an audience or when debating a topic.

#### Reading

- Most children at the early level recognise the majority of initial sounds but struggle to use these to decode new words. A few children are capable of acquiring new phonics and words at a quicker pace. At first and second level, a majority of children read fluently. Children at the first and second level need to develop further their higher order reading skills using text appropriate to their level of ability. Children across the school now need to develop their reading skills through a wider range of texts. A few classes visit the local library to access a wider range of texts but this is not consistent across the school. Overall, children lack enthusiasm for reading. Staff need to develop an improved reading culture across the school.

#### Writing

- At the early level, more needs done to support children to write independently and have a go at writing new words. A few children know how to write common words and try to use these in their play. At the first and second level, a few children are able to write reports. For example, older children wrote reports as part of their war topic. Children are unable to discuss the differing features of writing genres. They do not write frequently enough or have regular opportunities to develop writing skills appropriate to their ability. Staff need to have higher expectations for children's writing. Children's skills in spelling and punctuation need improved. Staff have taken steps to improve children's spelling using a new resource. However, children need spelling strategies taught more regularly.

## Numeracy and mathematics

### Number, money and measure

- Most children at the beginning of the early level recognise and use numbers to 10 in their learning. Children who have achieved the early level should develop their early numeracy skills at a faster pace. Staff should support them to work with larger numbers. They have a limited understanding of measure and time. Those who achieved first level at the end of last session lack confidence in the times tables. They can add and subtract two-digit numbers successfully but struggle with three-digit numbers. They have a limited understanding of fractions. They can recognise money values and are able to provide change from £1. They can guess accurately a metre and a kilogram. At second level, children were confident in tables to ten. They were unable to carry out simple calculations involving fractions, decimals and percentages. Across the school, children lack confidence in mental agility and do not have sufficient frequent opportunities to develop these skills. Across the second level, children lack understanding of probability and chance.

### Shape, position and movement

- At early and first level, most children can identify two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects appropriate to their stage. However, they are unable to describe features of these. At second level, most children understand perimeter but are not confident in working out the area of simple shapes. They are unfamiliar with the diameter and radius within circles.

### Information handling

- Across the school, children have had very little experience of information handling and presenting information in graphs. Older children were unfamiliar with the names and use of different types of graphs. Children across the school were unable to identify strategies to problem solve.

### Attainment over time

- The acting headteacher is receiving support from a local authority primary advisor to track attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics over time. The school is not yet able to demonstrate children's attainment over time. As staff increase their understanding of achievement of a CfE level, data will become more accurate in charting progress over time.
- The acting headteacher uses information to plan interventions to remove barriers to learning for individuals. There is a need to measure better the impact of these interventions to ensure they support children to make progress. At present, the documentation provided for children does not show how they are making progress towards achieving their targets. Staff should now use this data to raise attainment of cohorts or specific groups of children. There should now be a focus on evidencing how staff accelerate progress of all children with barriers to learning. The acting headteacher needs to work with staff to establish a clearer strategy to raise attainment for all learners. There is a need for staff to accurately evidence children's progress through CfE levels.

### Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children enjoy sharing their out of school achievements on the 'St Peter's Spotlight' display. Their achievements are recognised and celebrated in weekly assemblies, newsletters, and online platforms. Individual and house awards provide incentives for children to engage in their learning. Children are not yet able to discuss the skills and attributes they are developing through their achievements. Staff have identified that there is a need to record and monitor children's participation and achievements. This will help staff identify and support children who are missing valuable opportunities that lead to achievements.

## Equity for all learners

- Staff do not yet track the progress and attainment of children supported through pupil equity fund (PEF). The acting headteacher uses PEF funding to provide interventions and extra staff to support the wellbeing of all children. They now need to demonstrate how they are measuring the impact of these interventions. This would allow them to demonstrate if there is an attainment gap caused by children's socio-economic circumstances and how it is being closed. There is a need to review the activities delivered through PEF funding to ensure they have a clear focus on raising attainment.

## 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.