Summarised inspection findings

Newtonhill School and Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

18 June 2019

Key contextual information

Newtonhill Primary serves the coastal villages of Newtonhill and Muchalls and the surrounding rural areas. It also serves the growing village of Chapelton. At the time of the inspection there were 306 pupils split across 12 classes. Almost all children live within Scottish Index of Multiplication bands seven to ten, with the majority living in band nine.

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	

■ A positive, supportive and inclusive ethos is evident throughout the school. Senior leaders and all staff create a calm, welcoming learning environment. Relationships are consistently positive between staff and children, and are characterised by mutual respect. Most parents feel that staff know their child as an individual, and treat them with fairness and respect. Children throughout the school are articulate and polite. They are welcoming and friendly to visitors in the school. In partnership with the whole school community, the school values have been reviewed this session. As a result, there is a renewed focus on how these values underpin the work of the school. Most children feel their opinions are sought, and are confident about expressing their views about the school. Recently introduced school-wide pupil voice groups have the potential to increase further children's involvement in decision-making processes. Staff should increase opportunities for children to express their views across a broader range of classroom experiences.

■ In most classes, children's views are sought by teachers to inform planning. In a few classes, children's leadership of learning is most effective when they have been given the opportunity to contribute to the planning and delivery of learning activities. They demonstrate a higher level of motivation and interest as a result. In a few classes, children are provided with an increasing number of opportunities to lead learning. These include masterclasses led by pupils. These masterclasses provide opportunities for children to research topics of their choosing and share their learning with others. Building on this positive start, consideration should now be given to how these opportunities contribute to the progressive development of skills for learning, life and work.

■ Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Across the school, the majority of lessons are predominantly teacher-led, limiting opportunities for independent learning. In most classes, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. When the purpose of learning is shared and made clear, children discuss what success looks like, and are able to identify what to do in order to improve. Expectations for all learners are not yet consistently high. A lack of appropriate differentiation is resulting in the same pace of learning being set for all children. Teachers should ensure that activities are better matched to the needs of all learners, including those who require more challenge. Developing a shared understanding of what constitutes effective teaching, learning and assessment at Newtonhill School will support staff in ensuring consistently high-quality learning and teaching experiences for all children. Senior leaders

should monitor the quality of learning and teaching with greater clarity of purpose. They should provide evaluative feedback to staff, identifying clear points for action to support further development of consistency across the school.

- Effective written feedback is provided in a few examples of the children's writing. This good practice should be shared across the school and extended to include other areas of the curriculum. Feedback from teachers could be more closely aligned to the purpose of learning, enabling children to identify what they need to do to improve. In a few lessons, teachers demonstrate the effective use of questioning. They should develop further the quality of questioning in order to promote curiosity, independence and confidence. By so doing, children will be better able to develop higher order thinking skills. There are a few effective examples of children having opportunities to assess their own and each other's writing work. The more consistent inclusion of a plenary session in lessons will enable children to reflect on their learning and recap on skills learned. Overall, across the school, assessment is for learning strategies could be used more effectively and consistently by staff.

- Teachers are increasingly aware of the importance of the cycle of planning, teaching, assessing and recording children's progress, and how this helps to raise children's attainment. The school, and its cluster group of schools, are developing a shared understanding of standards, with an initial focus on literacy and numeracy. They are engaging successfully with National Benchmarks, particularly for literacy and numeracy. This is contributing well to teachers' increasing confidence in their professional judgements about children's progress in relation to Curriculum for Excellence levels. They should continue to develop approaches to moderation, including broadening the range of curriculum areas used for this purpose. In addition, they should continue with plans to develop further their use of holistic assessment to enrich the body of evidence on which to base professional judgements.

- The needs and interests of all learners would be better met if there was greater coherence in planning. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to work towards a shared understanding of pedagogy, and the underlying methodologies that support the development of skills. This will support children in knowing better themselves as learners and be better equipped to accept responsibility for their learning.

- The headteacher is leading the appropriate development of procedures for tracking and monitoring children's progress. There are effective systems in place to track and monitor children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. All teachers have regular professional meetings with members of the leadership team to discuss planning, learning and attainment data. This is becoming an increasingly valued feature of the school's work. Staff are building successfully a profile of the progress of all children. Through arrangements for tracking and monitoring, staff utilise a range of key information that may impact on children's progress. This helps identify children facing potential barriers to learning, and informs the planning and provision of targeted support. These developing procedures for tracking and monitoring children's progress are at the very early stage of making a significant impact on raising attainment. Moving forward, senior leaders should harness the current arrangements to ensure that this information accurately informs teachers' planning. The headteacher should continue to develop an increasingly strategic approach to ensuring the provision of well-matched learning experiences and appropriate pace and challenge for all children. Senior leaders should use the information to track particular cohorts, set aspirational targets and prompt greater levels of challenge for teaching staff. As planned, arrangements to include wider achievement and other curricular areas in tracking and monitoring of children's overall progress should continue to be developed, ensuring an increasingly consistent understanding.

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	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 attainment in literacy and numeracy
■ Overall, data provided by the school indicates that most children at early level are predicted to achieve the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence level in reading, listening and talking and numeracy by the end of the school session. In writing, the majority of children are predicted to achieve early level. At first level, the school predicts that the majority of children will achieve first level in reading, writing and numeracy, with most on course to achieve listening and talking. Teachers predict an improvement in reading and writing for children at second level this session. Most children are on course to achieve second level in reading, writing, listening and talking. The majority of children are on course to achieve second level numeracy. Inspection activity supports the accuracy of these predictions.

■ Teachers' professional judgement is being appropriately supported through collegiate discussions within the school, and in moderation activities with the cluster. Overall, staff have increasing confidence in the application of National Benchmarks to determine the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels.

Literacy and English
■ Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory.

Reading
■ At early level, children are developing their understanding of sounds made by the combination of letters and are using this knowledge to read words. Most children are enjoying reading and listening to stories, both in school and at home, and can explain why they like a story. Children working at first level can explain the appeal of a text that they are reading. Most children read with appropriate fluency and can discuss the key points of information. At second level, most children are able to outline their preferences and the main features of the text including details of the storyline and the main characters. Most children demonstrate an understanding of information contained within a text, though are less assured in drawing inferences or handling questions that require an evaluative response.

Writing
■ At early level, most children are developing well their skills in writing. Most children recognise how words come together to form a sentence and the importance of capital letters and full stops. At first level, most children structure their writing using punctuation and common connectives. Most children can talk knowledgeably about how effective words contribute to the impact of a story. Children working at second level are writing for a variety of purposes and are aware of the features of the different genre. To improve children's skills in writing, more opportunities to write at length should be provided. At both first and second level, there is scope for improvement in the accuracy and presentation of written work.

Listening and talking

■ Across stages, most children are developing well their skills in listening and talking. Their discussion skills are less well developed. At early level, most children enjoy hearing stories and can respond to characters and events. They ask questions and listen respectfully to the views of others. Children working at first level, when given the opportunity, engage with others in pair activities. Most children are attentive and respond to their teacher's questions and contribute meaningfully to whole class discussions. Most children working at second level show their understanding of information heard and appreciate the difference between opinions and facts. In developing further their communication skills, children need to expand on or question the responses of others as a way of also clarifying and deepening their own understanding of a topic.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, attainment is satisfactory in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children are making appropriate progress.

Number, money and measure

■ As a result of professional learning in numeracy, staff confidence in the delivery of this aspect of the curriculum is strengthening. Across the school, children are developing a range of strategies to solve problems and apply them in a range of contexts, relative to their stage. At early level, most children can double numbers, and add and subtract mentally within 20. They can use ordinal numbers in real life contexts and read o'clock on both analogue and digital clocks. At first level, the majority of children can round whole numbers to the nearest ten and 100. They can use the correct notation for common fractions and use known multiplication and division facts and other strategies to find unit fractions of whole numbers. At second level, the majority of children can read, write and order sets of decimal fractions to three decimal places. They can solve simple algebraic equations with one variable.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level, most children can recognise and describe common 2D shapes. At first level, the majority of children can identify, name and describe the features of 2D shapes and 3D objects. At second level, the majority of children can discuss, describe and classify angles using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.

Information handling

■ The majority of children can apply their information handling skills in real-life, relevant contexts. At early level, most children can interpret information from simple bar graphs. At first level, the majority of children can extract key information from a variety of data sets. At second level, the majority of children can collect, organise and display data accurately, including bar graphs, line graphs and pie charts. Their skills in extending this further using digital technology are less well developed.

Attainment over time

■ Overall, most children at early and first levels are making appropriate progress from prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Attainment at second level has yet to show consistent and sustained progress in children's learning. Senior leaders recognise that children's attainment at second level remains variable. There is a need to ensure that there is no loss of momentum as children move through second level and that they consolidate and build on prior learning. Arrangements to track children's progress as they move through different stages has recently been developed. Staff should use this to monitor children's progress, and respond promptly to concerns or identified gaps in learning. Senior staff have already launched a number of initiatives to raise attainment in numeracy and literacy. Early indications are that this helping to increase children's confidence and understanding of

number. Children's attainment in modern languages is being tracked in relation to Curriculum for Excellence levels, with early signs that children are making good progress at both first and second level.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ Children are encouraged to undertake leadership roles to increase their confidence and enable them to contribute to the school community. Participation in the Aberdeenshire Youth Volunteering Awards is enabling volunteers to be recognised for their effort. The development of pupil-led 'Masterclasses' and 'Genius Hour' provides opportunities for children to share their knowledge and areas of interest with others. Digital leaders are beginning to support the use of technology across the school. Enterprise activities led by each class is enabling all children to plan and contribute to a range of school events. Recently formed working groups have the potential to develop this further. By ensuring these leadership opportunities are not predominantly teacher-led, children will develop an even greater voice within the school. Children should be supported to develop their understanding of the skills for learning, life and work being developed through these leadership activities.

■ The school's commitment to language learning has resulted in the school being awarded a foundation level, International School Award, by the British Council. Involvement in a range of charity work is supporting further the development children's understanding of their role as a global citizen. Having achieved a bronze level Rights Respecting School Award, the school continues to deepen children's understanding of wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem, as they progress to silver level.

■ Children's wider achievements, both within and out with school, are recognised and celebrated. School 'eXellence factor' assemblies and the 'Roll of Honour' enable children's achievements to be shared with others. Class assemblies enable children to share their learning with their parents and the rest of the school. Staff have begun to record children's wider achievements against the four capacities. Building on this positive start, we have asked the school to develop further the use of this data to inform children's progress in relation to their skill development. By monitoring and tracking children's wider achievements more strategically, staff will be better placed to identify children at risk of missing out. This will enable staff to address any potential barriers to participation and ensure equity of opportunity.

Equity for all learners

■ The school's allocation of Pupil Equity Fund is being used appropriately to promote children's skills and confidence in numeracy. Enhancement to staffing is supporting collegiate working in developing whole school approaches, including nurture, and addressing identified gaps in children's learning in numeracy and literacy. Data currently being gathered points to emerging evidence that these strategies are having a positive impact on children's progress and levels of engagement.

■ The school liaises closely with a range of partners to address identified needs, ensuring the specific needs of individuals are met. Specialised resources, including digital technologies, are accessible to children at the point of need. Residential experiences, including a Forest Schools initiative for targeted children, are building their personal confidence, communication skills and life skills awareness.

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.