

# Summarised inspection findings

**Cullen Primary School**

The Moray Council

29 January 2019

## Key contextual information

In the previous year the school had several changes at senior leadership level. Currently the headteacher is in an acting post which began in August 2018.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very good

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

- There is a calm, welcoming and supportive culture in Cullen Primary School. Children are very well mannered and highly motivated to learn. They interact very positively and respectfully with each other during activities. All staff demonstrate their commitment to building nurturing and respectful relationships. Their interest in children's individual skills and attributes is key to the inclusive ethos in every class. There is a clear sense of a community working together to make learning experiences the best they can be for children. Staff demonstrate a collective responsibility for children who need help to experience success in their learning.
- At all stages, children are engaged in their learning. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups. They are able to share resources and support each other willingly. Almost all children show very good skills in self-management, sustaining concentration well throughout their tasks. Children benefit from highly positive relationships with their peers for almost all of the time.
- Children talk confidently about their learning. They can discuss their areas of success and strength in learning. Children working within first and second level are able to describe specific aspects that they need to develop and how they can access support to achieve improvement. They are confident that their views are valued and contribute to change and improvement for their learning and their school.
- Children are supported to evaluate their own work and are developing their skills in peer assessment. They are able to talk about their learning targets for literacy and numeracy and discuss their profiles confidently. These are updated regularly following learning conversations with their teachers. There are helpful prompts and structures to help children to evaluate progress within key assessment tasks. Across the school, children are benefitting from very well structured active and differentiated learning.
- Staff are using a range of information and assessment effectively to plan, differentiate and adapt their teaching to meet children's learning needs. This thorough approach enables teachers to engage in high quality group teaching and children to work independently and in pairs on challenging learning activities. Children gather pieces of work for literacy and

numeracy. This collection of work should be reviewed to better evidence significant progress in learning across the curriculum.

- In all classes teachers listen extremely well to children and respond appropriately to their comments, using these to reinforce key learning points and for entry and exit strategies from lessons. Teachers use questioning skilfully to extend thinking and learning. They are taking steps to develop children's higher order thinking skills and ability to justify choices and opinions.
- Staff provide very clear explanations and instructions. In all lessons observed, teachers shared learning intentions and success criteria for the whole class and for groups and revisited these regularly to monitor understanding. Children have regular opportunities to co-create their success criteria, as a class, in groups and individually. Staff are developing their approaches to skills development. Children can differentiate between learning and activities. To build on this effective practice, staff should continue to be explicit in connecting skills development through learning intentions and success criteria.
- In all classes, resources are well organised to ensure children can access them easily and independently. Lessons are organised to minimise resource gathering and make the most of learning time.
- Digital technologies are being developed across the school. Netbooks and interactive whiteboards are used appropriately to support learning and children use these with confidence and enthusiasm. They speak positively about the enhancement to their learning experiences and development of their independence and concentration by having regular access to these tools. The school has identified the need to build on children's capacity to use a range of digital technologies. Plans are in place to introduce iPads and to increase the use of GLOW, blogs and digital platforms to share learning.
- Across all stages of the school, staff make appropriate use of formative assessment strategies to check children's understanding and help them to evaluate their learning. Children are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions. This approach reinforces key learning very effectively. Well established approaches to cooperative learning mean that children are developing the skills to collaborate in groups and talk about their learning. Teachers provide high quality verbal feedback for pupils, which reflects their successes and contributions to learning intentions and success criteria. This quality of feedback should extend to written feedback and include all curriculum areas.
- Teachers are involved in shared observations of learning and teaching with the headteacher. This contributes further to a culture of peer support and sharing of effective practice. Information from professional learning, tracking and monitoring conversations, moderation activities, pupil focus groups and sampling of pupils' work is helping the staff team to identify effective practice.
- Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very effectively. They give careful consideration to how children are grouped within classes to meet the needs of individual learners. Support for learning assistants and the support for learning teacher work in partnership with class teachers. They provide valuable help for individuals and groups of children who need additional support with their learning. This strong team work enables children to learn and experience

success in school. The staff team is well placed to consider further how they can plan together to challenge and stretch thinking for higher achieving children at all stages.

- Teachers plan jointly for mixed stage learning opportunities such as P1-3 'Terrific Tuesday' groups and P4-7 maths sets. The yearly overview and termly plans clearly identify what is to be learned. Teachers evaluate these plans regularly and use this information to adapt plans and practice to meet the needs of all learners.

## 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

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

### Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall the data presented by the school shows that most children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels at early, first and second level in literacy and numeracy. From inspection activity we agree that teachers' professional judgements are accurate. The school makes effective use of a wide range of formative and summative assessment. This is supported by use of Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSAs), moderation activities, school tracking data and the National Benchmarks.
- The school tracks thoroughly the attainment of children with additional support needs and almost all are attaining as appropriate to their level of need. The school does not yet track cohorts of learners, such as the highest attaining children. It is the judgment of inspectors that there is headroom for increased attainment for a few children.

### Overall progress in literacy

- Attainment in literacy is good overall, with particular strengths in listening and talking. Staff use the Moray progression framework. They have recently introduced the Northern Alliance's emerging literacy programme and teachers report early signs of improvement in children's skills at the early level. Staff have identified that further development work is needed in phonological awareness and spelling at first and second level.

### Reading

- Overall, attainment in reading is good. The use of higher order reading skills and the specific teaching of reading strategies, using a wide range of texts, is regularly reinforced across the school. At all levels, children enjoy reading and are engaging well with a range of texts across learning and selecting texts for their personal reading. At early level, most children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. At first level, children are reading a range of texts fluently and with expression. At second level, most children can identify the purpose of a text with suitable explanation. They can identify the key features of language used by the author.

### Writing

- Overall children's attainment in writing is good. Across the school, children have the opportunity to write in a variety of genres. At early level, most children are leaving spaces between words and beginning to make an attempt to spell familiar words correctly. At first level, most children can write independently, punctuating most sentences accurately. They can link sentences using common conjunctions. They use knowledge of the alphabet to locate words in a dictionary. At second level, most children can use a range of punctuation and use

sentences of different lengths. They have opportunities to write for a variety of purposes across the curriculum. Children at second level would benefit from writing at greater length.

### **Listening and Talking:**

- Children's progress in listening and talking is good. Their skills in interacting with others have been well developed through co-operative group work and children can demonstrate their ability to listen well to each other in a very respectful manner. Almost all children are able to speak confidently, whether in small groups, pairs or class situations. They interact positively and supportively with each other and display a high level of emotional awareness of other children's feelings. Most children at early level can respond to instructions related to their learning and ask questions which demonstrate understanding. At first level, most children are demonstrating that they can ask and respond to different types of questions and can identify key ideas within spoken texts. At second level, most children are able to talk about their thoughts and feelings, listen to the opinions of others and contribute their own views. Most children at second level are asking and responding to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and considering details behind key ideas.

### **Overall progress in numeracy**

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are making very good progress. Across all stages there is a positive approach to helping children connect the importance of mathematics and numbers. Teachers are supporting children to link their current learning to future use at home, in their community and for further learning. Children at first and second level can give examples of mathematics being essential skills for engineering, mechanics, catering, time management, retail, budgeting, and saving. There is scope to build on this further by developing the focus of the impact of mathematics on the world, past present and future through social studies and across the curriculum.

### **Number, money and measure**

- Across the school most children show appropriate understanding of number processes. They are developing a deeper understanding of the number system as they progress through the school and have a range of strategies for quick recall of number bonds and facts. Children are encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary when learning in maths and numeracy. Across all stages children are developing their knowledge of patterns and relationships in number. Most children working at early level are confident in number recognition and recalling number sequences. They can recognise the number of objects in a group and are developing their skills in estimation. They are developing skills in using a range of strategies and the ability to explain why they have chosen them. Most children working towards first level are confident in their number bonds to 20 and can apply them in different contexts. They can work confidently with hundreds, tens and units, recognising the value of individual digits within numbers. Children can apply strategies to determine multiplication facts e.g. repeated addition, grouping, partitioning and multiplication facts. They are developing a range of strategies to process addition, subtraction, and division multiplication calculations. They can recognise that a fraction is part of a whole and are developing confidence with halves and quarters using the correct notation. By second level, most children can manage calculations involving equivalent forms of common fractions and decimal fractions in mental agility tasks and to solve problems.
- Most children can demonstrate competence and confidence in a range of number concepts. Children are able to give confident and accurate answers to numeracy challenges and are able to explain the strategies they used to find their answers. They are able to, and value, the

opportunity to discuss alternative strategies with their peers, teachers and support assistants. Children are able to demonstrate their knowledge of fractions, percentages and decimals and can explain the link between a digit, its place and its value.

- As children move through the school, they are using appropriate vocabulary to compare sizes, measures and amounts. They are able to make connections between learning about measuring and where they will use this skill in real life. By second level children can choose the appropriate units of measurement for volume, weight, area and height. Most are able to use their knowledge to convert between standard units to decimals and solve calculations of length, weight and volume.

### **Shape position and movement**

- Children working in early level, when asked, can recognise common two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects and a few are able to name them. Most children working within first level understand the language of position and direction. Within second level most are able to describe how they are learning about compass points and why this is important and useful.

### **Information handling**

- Those children working towards early level can organise objects for specific purposes. They are able to apply their counting skills to contribute to concrete or pictorial displays. They can match and sort items in a variety of different ways. As they move through first level, children are able to choose the most appropriate way to gather, sequence and sort information for specific purposes. Second level learners discussed how they would select the most appropriate method of collecting, organising and displaying data by using surveys, tables, graphs, spreadsheets and charts.
- Overall, children are learning in a maths and numeracy culture which enables their contribution and participation. Teachers skilfully support children to use their prior learning and knowledge to tackle new concepts. Maths and numeracy activities are enabling children to share their thinking, processes and solutions. Teachers are proactive in helping children at all stages to link mathematical concepts. They are developing a range of strategies to encourage children to self-challenge, to set themselves targets and measure their success in achievement. Children respond positively to the highly differentiated learning experiences in maths and numeracy. Teachers are ensuring that there is time for children to experience personalisation and choice in their learning and that there is appropriate time for them to experiment, investigate and enjoy learning in maths.

### **Attainment over time**

- Staff track children's progress thoroughly during the year. The school team uses the Moray Tracking and Monitoring in the Broad General Education (BGE). This provides a helpful framework, supporting teachers to use a range of assessment techniques. Staff should now build on this foundation to track children's progress year on year. There is scope to consider how assessment information and data can be used to evidence progress, shifts and trends and ensure reliable judgements of children's progress individually, in stages and within cohorts over time. This will ensure that children have maximum opportunities to improve their attainment as they move through the school.

### **Overall quality of achievement**

- Children at all stages contribute well to the life of the school and to their wider community. They are proud of their school and participate in a range of community events, including local



charity events such as providing flower arrangements for a local fundraiser and in community enterprise activities. Children's personal achievements are recognised and celebrated at whole school assemblies and their achievements within and outwith school are tracked and celebrated. There is scope to build on this tracking of achievement to identify and remove any barriers to participation for individual or targeted groups of children, for example those children who live in a rural location and may not be accessing after school clubs.

- Children take very seriously their leadership roles and would welcome more opportunities to lead. They are very keen to take up their roles as members of the pupil council, as school and house captains and other groups.
- The school should continue with plans to help children to recognise the skills they are developing as a result of participating in wider achievement opportunities and how this links with the world of work.

### **Equity for all Learners**

- All staff know their children very well on an individual basis and respond sensitively to any emotional and social need. This session the school has accessed Pupil Equity Funding for additional targeted support in numeracy, literacy and health and wellbeing. Staff are reporting early signs of impact. Staff should now build on existing systems to actively promote equity of success to meet the needs of all children who at risk of missing out or not attaining to their full potential.

## 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.