

Summarised inspection findings

Foyers Primary School

The Highland Council

25 June 2019

Key contextual information

Foyers Primary school is a small rural school situated in the South Loch Ness area of The Highland Council. There is a shared headship with Aldourie Primary School 12 miles away. The school consists of 14 pupils within one multi-composite class from P1-P7. There is one full time teacher, and 0.2 additional support needs teacher and two part-time pupil support assistants. Nearly all children transition to Inverness Royal Academy at the end of P7.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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 very positive and inclusive ethos within the school. Children benefit from positive relationships with each other and adults within the school. Children are taught in a multi-composite class from P1-P7. As a result, all staff know the needs of children well. In class, children have the opportunity to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. They are eager participants in their learning and engage well with other children and adults. They are happy to share their learning with others and enjoy expressing ideas in response to challenges set by staff. It is particularly evident how children immediately set to interesting and enjoyable tasks as soon as they arrive in school. The result of which is there is no learning time wasted.
- Children are able to demonstrate independence and responsibility when undertaking learning. As a result of recent work on managing emotions they are developing a positive attitude to challenge and are in the process of becoming more resilient. There is scope to develop further children's understanding of children's rights through the United Nations Convention of the rights of the child (UNCRC). Approaches such as use of quieter areas and 'see three before me' are having a positive impact on children's ability to learn independently. Children have opportunity to lead aspects of their learning and take responsibility to become young leaders, for example, as digital leaders for younger children, enterprise and as part of the eco-committee working towards their Silver Eco-Schools Scotland award.
- Learning planned using real-life contexts contributes to children being motivated to learn. For example, older children particularly enjoy using the digital classroom opportunities at home, which are well organised by the class teacher. All children particularly enjoy using the outdoor environment for learning. During the inspection week they were increasing their knowledge of planting and growth over time. Staff should build on this good practice and, where possible, use more creative approaches which allow children to apply their learning in a range of contexts across the curriculum. We have discussed with the headteacher ways to extend learning further using the local environment within which the school is placed.
- Teaching is of a high quality. Children are benefiting from a range of teaching approaches which are adapted to meet the needs of all children. The purpose of lessons are explained very

well, children experience direct teaching in appropriate groupings and there are regular check in's with groups of children as each lesson progresses. Support staff contribute effective support to children as individuals and in small groups. Effective differentiation approaches are in place which matches learning to all pupil needs and ensures all children are challenged appropriately and making progress. The classroom environment is very well-organised and the pace of teaching is good. Digital technology is becoming a very effective way for children to learn, for example, children created an online video as part of a reading initiative.

- Children receive helpful oral feedback throughout lessons. Teachers use questions skilfully to help children understand their learning. Support staff should build on this strong practice to ensure it is a regular feature of all lessons. Written feedback in jotters is helping children understand their next steps in learning. In a number of examples, teachers used questioning appropriately to explore a range of strategies. This allowed children to justify and explain their answers and is leading to the development of higher order thinking skills.
- A range of formative and summative assessment strategies to evaluate children's learning is in place, particularly for literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These strategies have been a focus for the Aldourie/Foyers cluster group and are being used and evaluated over time. The introduction of 'Learning Ladders' is beginning to show children's progress for parents and children. Recent assessment evidence is beginning to provide better information on children's progress. There is less evidence of self and peer assessment undertaken by children at different stages. Moving forward it will be necessary to ensure that all strategies provide the reliable evidence needed to report on children's progress and attainment.
- Planning for learning is in place to meet the needs of children across the curriculum. The class teacher is a member of The South Loch Ness Schools Network and meets other teachers to moderate their work using The Highland Council's key assessment task structure. Staff plan using experiences and outcomes across all eight curricular areas, supported by progression pathways. A shared technology space is used well by schools to discuss good practice and is helping Foyers Primary School staff become more confident in moderation activities. To improve further, we would recommend that the headteacher takes a more active role, within the class at times, to support the processes of assessment and moderation to ensure that all children are making the best possible progress in their learning.

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

- Attainment data provided by the school is based on teachers' professional judgements, albeit it is influenced strongly by standardised assessment results. Although most of these professional judgements are accurate, teaching staff would benefit from more moderation activities both within the school and in partnership with neighbouring schools. This would further increase teachers' confidence in making reliable judgements about children's progress across all areas of the curriculum and in using the benchmarks effectively. More regular professional dialogue with the headteacher would also aid this process.
- From the data provided by the school, supported by inspection activities, overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English across the school, with a minority making good progress. Most children are performing better in listening and talking, and reading. Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics, performing strongest in number, money and measurement.

Literacy and English

Listening and talking

- Overall, most children are making good progress in listening and talking. Across the school, most children listen well to teachers and one another. They work confidently in pairs and small groups. At first level, children listen and respond appropriately when following instructions about their learning. By second level, children select and share information and can use a variety of vocabulary to express their opinions. They listen attentively and are becoming increasingly skilled in talking confidently in groups.

Reading

- The majority of children are making good progress with their reading. The school has had a recent focus on encouraging children to read for pleasure and this is beginning to impact positively on children's progress. Most children enjoying reading and engaging well with a range of texts. Children at early and first level are using their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read a variety of common words with growing confidence. They read with fluency in small groups. By second level, most children talk confidently about their reading books. They can distinguish between fiction and non-fiction, and enjoy reading in groups and sharing their thoughts and views.

Writing

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in writing. At the first level, children are developing skills forming letters legibly and using capital letters and full stops to punctuate their texts well. By second level, the majority of children organise their writing in paragraphs, start sentences in a variety of ways and spell most words accurately. The recent emphasis on spelling is proving successful with children making less mistakes and improving their

dictionary skills. Older children use appropriate language to suit the purpose and audience when writing. They are successfully developing their planning skills to help improve the content of their writing. A few children are providing high quality extended pieces of writing.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children are making satisfactory progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. However, this progress is variable across the school. As planned, the school needs to place increased emphasis on improving attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measurement

- Most children are developing skills in number, money and measurement appropriately and are able to apply these skills well. Across the school, children are developing their mental agility skills well. At the first level, most children sequence numbers to 20 and can add and subtract accurately within ten. By second level, most children add and subtract confidently with two digits and can round to the nearest ten and 100 accurately. Most children are less confident in identifying fractions and working out fractions of a quantity.

Shape, position and movement

- At first level, most children can recognise and sort common 2D shapes and 3D objects. The majority of children within first level use mathematical language to describe the properties of 2D shapes. Children are also able to identify a line of symmetry using 2D shapes and identify that both sides are the same.

Information handling

- Across the school, children are using simple bar charts and analysing data from surveys on, for example, local traffic. There is a need to provide more opportunities for children to develop and apply information handling skills in a variety of contexts.

Attainment over time

- The school has correctly identified that children are making better progress in listening and talking, and in reading than they are in writing. They are aware that attainment in writing and, in particular, numeracy and mathematics, needs to improve. The school was previously tracking using Highland Council Summary of Pupil Progress data and recognised the need to have more detailed information on attainment. The current tracking of attainment using Standardised Diagnostic testing was introduced for the 2017-18 session. Moving on, the school needs to introduce more robust and rigorous tracking of attainment over time to identify any trends in performance which may occur for individuals, small groups across the whole school. Tracking across all areas of the curriculum, and not just literacy and numeracy, should also be a future priority.
- Most children who need additional support with their learning are making good progress from their prior learning, including their social and emotional development. The school should now monitor children's performance against personalised targets more fully.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children have a range of opportunities to achieve through taking on different roles and responsibilities in class and across the school. The school regularly raises funds for local charities with children involved in the planning and delivery of these events. The school should now look to strengthen the role of the pupil council to ensure it plays a more active role in the life of the school and contributes more fully to school improvement.
- Children's achievements in class and outwith school are recognised and celebrated, although there is scope for these successes to be displayed more fully across the school to motivate

others. Children have opportunities to experience personal achievement through trips to local sites of interest, engaging in community events and participating in a range of sporting and cultural lunchtime and after school clubs. These clubs are popular with children offering a wider range of experiences that appeal to more children. Where possible, they should run for more extended periods of time rather than as a small block of activities to extend further children's skills. Older children enjoy participating in a range of outdoor learning activities during the school's annual residential trip and have opportunities to go skiing in winter. This is helping to develop children's teamwork skills.

- The headteacher has started to record and monitor children's achievements to ensure any child at risk of missing out is identified and supported to achieve more. This tracking is at an early stage. As planned, the school should look to introduce the tracking and monitoring of skills development as part of the process for tracking achievement.

Equity

- The headteacher and staff know their children and families very well. They have effective systems in place to monitor the progress of individual children, including those facing challenge in their lives. All children are provided with equitable support depending on their needs. The school has used Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide appropriate individual appropriately target support for children.
- The school has outlined its proposed future use of PEF to achieve equity and promote the development of social and emotional skills, notably resilience and self-regulation. The school should ensure it has clear plans in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of the identified interventions and approaches.

Other relevant evidence

- The school is developing children's emotional literacy through a dedicated programme and approach to improve their confidence and resilience. Children commented on how much they enjoy this work and the difference it is beginning to make to them on a personal level.

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.