Summarised inspection findings

Uryside Primary School and Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

31 March 2020

Key contextual information

Uryside Primary School and Nursery Class is a non-denominational school situated in the town of Inverurie. The school moved from the centre of the town in 2017. It is now situated within a new housing development on the outskirts of the town. There has been significant growth within the community over the last few years which has resulted in a continually rising school roll. The school roll currently sits at 349 children across 16 classes. The school has seen significant change in leadership over the past four years. The current headteacher took up post in January 2019. She is supported by two depute headteachers, one of whom was appointed in August 2019.

1.3 Leadership of change	good

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

■ Since starting, the headteacher has developed a clear understanding of the school's improvement journey and identified accurately the next steps for further improvement. The headteacher has strengthened approaches to self-evaluation and quality assurance. As a result, she has been able to identify well-judged priorities for school improvement. Senior leaders support effectively the work of the school through clear remits that utilise their strengths effectively. Collectively, they show a very strong commitment to leading change and developing a culture of improvement across the school.

■ Senior leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context in which children and their families live. They know individual children and their families well. Senior leaders use this information appropriately to ensure that strategic planning meets the needs of this evolving community. They identified family learning as an area for improvement to support the attainment of identified children. This has led to a range of initiatives to support parents with different aspects of children's learning at home.

■ The headteacher refreshed recently the vision, values and aims of the school. As a result, these are beginning to permeate and shape the work and life of the school. In moving forward, senior leaders need to ensure that the whole school community understand fully the vision and values. They should also ensure that the school values align more closely to the developing positive behaviour framework used across the school.

■ Senior leaders have developed a more structured approach to evaluating the work of the school. There are appropriate systems in place to gather the views of stakeholders, undertake learning observations and analyse assessment data. Senior leaders use this information well to identify and prioritise areas for improvement. Teachers are beginning to engage more in using the challenge questions in How good is our school? (4th edition) as a tool for reflection. They require more support in identifying appropriate evidence to validate their evaluations of the quality indicators.

- Senior leaders use approaches for evaluating the work of the school appropriately to inform the school improvement plan (SIP). This focuses on a small number of relevant priorities, agreed with staff. The current SIP has clearly defined priorities that focus on actions to improve children's attainment. This includes developing consistent approaches to reading and developing further the Uryside curriculum. In addition, there is a clear focus on developing leadership at all levels. This is required to support the pace of change needed to continue to improve outcomes for all learners. Senior leaders should ensure they make links between all approaches to evaluating the work of the school to demonstrate fully the impact of improvement priorities on outcomes for children.

- Staff at all levels engage in a range of professional learning activities linked to school improvement priorities. This is leading to staff developing an understanding of what makes effective learning and teaching. Teachers and senior leaders have created recently the Uryside Learner Framework. This gives clear guidance to teachers in terms of expectations of children's learning experiences. Senior leaders should continue to develop ways to demonstrate how professional learning is helping improve children's attainment and achievement.

- Senior leaders continue to develop a culture of collaboration across each stage. This is supporting consistency of learning experiences at each year group. Teachers are beginning to reflect on their own contribution to leadership across the school. The majority of teachers lead key areas of the curriculum with enthusiasm and positivity. This involves supporting staff and children in the implementation of approaches to teaching and learning. A few teachers have engaged in helpful professional learning to support their development as middle leaders. Most staff are embracing and effecting positive change in the school. They are developing confidence to suggest ideas for school development and improvement. Senior leaders should build on this and engage staff in regular professional learning and research to support improvements in teaching and learning.

- Senior leaders have taken appropriate steps to increase opportunities for children to develop leadership skills, and strengthen their role in school improvement. This includes health and wellbeing, pupil council and enterprise group. Teachers should continue to develop all children's leadership roles across the school and in class. They need greater opportunity to plan and lead their own learning. Most parents are supportive of the work of the school. The headteacher has valued and enabled parents to develop a number of initiatives. She is also proactive in identifying links with the wider community to support key aspects of the school's work. As the school continues its improvement agenda, senior leaders should ensure children, parents and partners are active participants in this process. For example, in developing the curriculum to ensure children enjoy progression, depth and relevance across all curriculum areas.

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

■ Children and staff are very proud of their new school and engage well in a bright and welcoming learning environment. Across the school, there are positive and caring relationships between staff and children. Overall, most children are eager to learn and engage well during lessons. They are confident, articulate and respectful and enjoy being members of the Uryside Primary School community.

■ In most lessons, teachers share with children the purpose of their learning and what success should look like. They offer clear explanations to support children's understanding. In the majority of lessons, learning is teacher led. This results in children not actively engaging in their learning. Teachers should ensure that children take increasing responsibility during lessons, so they become more independent in their learning.

■ In the majority of lessons, children would benefit from a brisker pace and more challenge in their learning. In a few classes, teachers differentiate effectively children's learning experiences. This ensures tasks and activities are well matched to children's needs and interests. Teachers now need to develop this practice consistently across the school.

■ In a few classes, children are involved in planning aspects of interdisciplinary learning contexts. For example, they identify what they already know about a context and what they would like to find out. At early level, children respond well to the different opportunities given to them to lead their learning. In the majority of classes, children engage in peer- and self-assessment. Teachers should provide all children with increased opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning to support them to know how well they are progressing and what would help them in their next steps.

■ Senior leaders have taken forward a number of developments to increase children's reading for pleasure. This has involved a range of successful initiatives. For example, children and staff have improved the school library. Positively, older children helped to identify new books to purchase to increase the range and amount of books on offer. Helpfully, parents take a lead role in organising and developing the library.

■ Across the school, the majority of teachers make appropriate use of digital technology to enhance learning. Children use a range of digital technologies, such as interactive whiteboards and tablets which help motivate and engage them in their learning. Positive examples include making use of laptops to write and edit newspaper reports. Children also make good use of electronic devices to reinforce and consolidate learning, for example, times tables. In order to improve children's literacy skills, teachers should develop a clear progression framework to ensure children build on their digital skills throughout the school.

■ In the majority of classes, teachers use questioning to check children's understanding. In a few classes, teachers ask effective questions which probe children's thinking. This encourages fuller responses and requires children to justify their answers. Teachers should develop further their understanding of the use of questioning to ensure this supports children's thinking. The majority of teachers provide appropriate feedback to children to help them focus on next steps in learning in writing. Teachers have engaged in professional learning to support their approaches to providing feedback to children. Teachers should build on this to ensure they use feedback consistently across all areas of the curriculum.

■ The quality of teaching across the school is not yet of a consistently high enough standard. To improve children's experiences, senior leaders and staff should continue to develop a shared understanding of agreed approaches to learning and teaching in Uryside.

■ Teachers use a range of formative and summative assessments, as well as the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, to gather evidence of progress of learning. They should use this assessment information more effectively to support appropriate differentiation of learning activities to ensure children are sufficiently supported and challenged. Senior leaders should continue to work with teachers to analyse and interpret a wide range of assessment information. This should enable them to more effectively improve outcomes for all children.

■ Most teachers are enthusiastic about working collaboratively with colleagues within the school. Senior leaders enable teachers to plan learning activities and assessments collegiately. Teachers use medium- and short-term planning tools, and curriculum progression pathways to support their planning of children's learning. Teachers should engage more with the National Benchmarks to support the development of meaningful high quality assessments. They need to develop their use across all curricular areas. This should provide learners with opportunities to demonstrate breadth, depth and application of learning.

■ Teachers engage in moderation activities across stages which supports their understanding of expectations within a level. The headteacher has identified the need to extend professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop further their understanding of moderation across levels. Teachers need to develop increased expectations of what children can achieve through the levels.

■ Senior leaders and staff meet regularly during the session to discuss the progress of children. They identify children who encounter barriers to their learning and children who require additional support. With senior leaders, teachers identify the individual needs of children and plan appropriate interventions. These are reviewed and evaluated regularly to ensure children progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ Senior leaders and staff have reviewed and refreshed recently the curriculum rationale. They need to share this more fully with the whole school community. They have also created a curriculum framework to support teachers to deliver children's entitlements to a broad general education.

■ Teachers make use of progression frameworks for almost all areas of the curriculum. These take account of National Benchmarks which teachers use to assess aspects of children's learning. Over the last few years, teachers have updated the literacy and numeracy pathways to reflect their new approaches to teaching these areas of the curriculum.

■ In the last year, senior leaders have led effectively the development of new approaches to teaching literacy and in particular, reading. As a result, teachers are becoming more confident in delivering these new approaches. Helpfully, staff have shared the new methodology with parents as part of literacy workshops. Senior leaders have also introduced a number of successful initiatives to engage parents more in reading with their children. These include, 'Books and Bosies' and book treasure hunts in the local area. Staff should continue to build on this strong start and take steps to measure the subsequent impact on children's attitudes to reading and progress.

■ In a few classes, children benefit from opportunities to learn outdoors. At early level, teachers make positive use of the school grounds to develop children's understanding of mathematics in meaningful and enjoyable ways. Staff across the school need to make effective use of their outdoor area to enhance and enrich children's learning.

■ The new school is located quite a significant distance from the previous school building. Staff are having to strengthen and develop partnership working with new and established partners to support delivery of the curriculum. Effective partnership working with local builders is enriching the curriculum and increasing children's understanding of the world of work. The headteacher and staff should build on this positive foundation to support the delivery of the curriculum in meaningful and relevant ways. Staff should use the Career Education Standard (3-18) to develop a progressive skills framework, incorporating existing opportunities across the curriculum.

■ At early level, teachers work very well together to develop motivating spaces for children to play. They engage in professional learning to support their understanding and implementation of play. Children are responding very well to the opportunities they have to play. Teachers reflect continually on the quality of the provision and the positive impact this is having on children's learning and development.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ Parents receive regular and helpful feedback about their child's progress at the correct time. They feel confident to approach the school with suggestions or concerns and receive advice on how to support their child's learning at home. Staff organise activities where parents and children can learn together, such as the workshops on reading and online safety.

■ Senior leaders value the contribution of the Parent Forum. Most parents feel they are encouraged to be involved in the Parent Forum and the majority of parents report that they are kept informed about their work. Parents actively support a range of clubs and activities within the school.

■ Staff work well with a range of partners to enhance the curriculum and provide additional resources to support learning. These include the Inverurie Rotary Club, local businesses and the Countryside Initiative. Children have benefitted from visits to local farms and building sites to enhance their learning experiences and the local pastor supports the religious and moral education curriculum through regular visits.

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.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good

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

- Uryside Primary School has a welcoming and inclusive ethos. The school community is proud of their new building. Children, parents, staff and partners have embraced collectively the challenges and rewards presented by change of location and the increase in roll. Almost all children are respectful and polite to adults and to each other. The school values of 'Kind, Resilient, Growing, Supportive and Challenged' are reflected in the positive relationships that exist between members of the school community. As a result, most children feel safe, respected and have someone to speak to about worries or concerns. Most parents report that the school is helping their child to be confident. Almost all parents feel that staff treat their child in a fair and respectful manner. The majority of parents believe that the school effectively supports their child's emotional wellbeing.

- The staff at Uryside Primary are beginning to raise the children's awareness of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This has been introduced through whole school assemblies and a few classes have also developed Class Charters. This work is at an early stage and children are not yet able to describe their rights and explain why these are important. Senior leaders have also initiated the use of restorative conversations as part of their approach to promoting positive behaviour and relationships. Staff should reflect on how this emerging policy aligns with their current practice and national guidance. Senior leaders should ensure that there is a shared language and consistent understanding of the school's approaches.

- Senior leaders and teachers use staged intervention processes effectively and support for learning plans are in place for individual children. Staff are knowledgeable about potential barriers to learning and work together with parents and children to agree appropriate support. Teachers use their knowledge of children well to plan effectively for literacy and numeracy interventions. Most children with additional support needs are making appropriate progress. There is a need to ensure that targets are more specific. Teachers should measure more clearly the impact of interventions, and identify appropriate follow up targets.

- Teachers use a progressive learning pathway for health and wellbeing. This is well resourced and aligned with Curriculum for Excellence. Most children demonstrate a knowledge of a few aspects of health and wellbeing, such as how to stay safe online and the importance of being healthy. In a few classes, teachers use emotional check-ins effectively to support children's readiness to learn. However, children are not yet aware of the wellbeing indicators and have not started to explore these as part of their learning about health and wellbeing. As a result, they are unable to discuss and fully evaluate their own wellbeing to identify strengths and areas for development. Senior leaders need to improve all children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators.

- Senior leaders identify key interventions designed to support children with social and emotional needs. This planning is personalised and linked to the wellbeing indicators. Staff work well with children showing sensitivity and respect. As a result, the majority of children present as calm and secure, which is gradually extending to their own classroom. This approach is showing early signs of having a positive impact on children's wellbeing. Senior leaders should continue to identify core staff to support these interventions, and ensure they engage in relevant professional learning to support their practice. This is needed to help maximise the positive impact the resource has on the wellbeing of children who require this support.

- Support staff are respectful and caring when working with children and groups with specific needs. In the majority of classes, communication and teamwork between pupil support assistants (PSAs) and class teachers is effective. This is helping to develop productive working relationships underpinned by a shared purpose of supporting children. PSAs are positive about the impact of their professional learning. They need to continue to develop new knowledge and skills, with a particular focus on how to support children's emotional wellbeing. A significant number of children are currently withdrawn from class to access support. Staff should review this practice to ensure that they meet the needs of learners effectively through inclusive approaches.

- Staff are aware of their statutory duties. They participate in relevant professional learning around statutory requirements. Children have a range of opportunities to be physically active and all children receive their entitlement to two hours of quality physical exercise. They are developing their skills effectively across this area of the curriculum. Most report that staff provide them with opportunities to get exercise and teach them how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

- Diversity is valued at Uryside Primary and the inclusive ethos ensures that all children are encouraged to acknowledge, appreciate and respect their similarities and differences. The work of the 'Chinese Club' permeates the whole school. It reflects and celebrates an aspect of the local community by raising awareness of the Chinese culture. Staff promote effectively the use of Makaton across the school. This helps children to be interested, accepting and enthusiastic about different ways of communicating. Children from different cultures and those with a range of additional needs are empowered as a result of the school's successful approaches to inclusion and equality.

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, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Data provided by the school for session 2018/19 shows that most children achieved the appropriate level in listening and talking, reading, and numeracy and mathematic and the majority achieved expected levels in writing. Overall, the school's data is not wholly accurate. Staff identified a number of children who are exceeding levels, but this information is not yet accurate. Across the school, there is a significant number of children who could be achieving more.

Literacy and English

■ Overall, attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory. Most children are making satisfactory progress and a few children are making good progress.

Listening and talking

■ At early level, most children listen well to their teachers and follow instructions. They are developing their skills when engaging with their learning partners. At first level, the majority of children are able to share their thoughts and ideas. They are keen to share their thoughts and experiences with their peers. Children need prompted to apply key skills such as turn taking and using verbal and non-verbal techniques. At second level, most children share their opinions confidently. They contribute well to group and class discussions and take turns appropriately. At this stage, children need to develop further their skills in talking and listening across real and relevant contexts. Across the school, children need to continue to develop their listening and talking skills across the curriculum.

Reading

■ At early level, most children are developing their awareness of sounds and are able to read and make simple words. A few children can read and engage with texts that are more complex. At first level, the majority of children read fluently, and a few use expression well to demonstrate understanding. Children are not yet confident to describe the different skills used to support their understanding of different texts. At second level, almost all children demonstrate a keen interest in reading for pleasure. While most children read in a fluent way, they are not using expression confidently when reading aloud unfamiliar texts. Most children are able to skim and scan texts to identify the purpose and find key information. Children are less confident in providing evidence from the text when answering inferential and evaluative questions.

Writing

■ At early level, most children write for enjoyment in a range of play and real contexts. The majority of children are beginning to write simple sentences independently. A few children write a number of sentences making consistent use of a capital letter and full stop. At first level, the

majority of children write for a range of purposes. They use simple punctuation correctly as part of focused writing lessons. They are not yet applying consistently their understanding of punctuation and spelling across their learning. At second level, the majority of children create appropriate texts for different purposes and audiences. Their use of punctuation across their learning is variable. The majority of children write in a fluent and legible way. However, children should improve the presentation of written work through clear expectations of what is an acceptable standard.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Most children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics, and a few children are making good progress. There are gaps in children's learning at different stages which senior leaders have identified and are supporting. Children are capable of better attainment.

Number, money and measurement

■ At early level, most children count forwards and backwards within the range of 1-10. Most children add on using concrete materials and a few do this without materials. At first level, the majority of children can round two digits to the nearest 10. They are less confident rounding three digits numbers to the nearest hundred. The majority of children identify the value of digits to thousands. They confidently apply their skills in addition and subtraction to solve problems but are less confident applying their skills in multiplication and division. At second level, the majority of children round to the nearest 100 and 1,000. They are not yet able to round confidently to the nearest 10,000. The majority are able to split a whole into a fraction and order fractions. The majority express a fraction as a percentage but are less confident identifying the percentage of a whole number.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level, most children identify and name two-dimensional shapes. They are less confident in identifying three-dimensional objects. Most children use appropriate positional language. At first level, the majority of children have a good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects and identify these in the environment. Across first and second level, children are not able to use appropriate mathematical language to describe the properties of three-dimensional objects. At second level, the majority of children use appropriate language to explain the different types of angles. They are not yet confident in identifying lines of symmetry in common two-dimensional shapes.

Information handling

■ At early level, most children sort and display a range of old and new toys into a venn diagram. At first level, the majority of children recall when they have interpreted and display information into bar graphs. Across early and first level, children need to develop further their skills in displaying and interpreting information. At second level, the majority of children are able to describe a range of ways to display data. They interpret and draw conclusions from a range of data. Their understanding of using spreadsheets as a way of collecting, organising and displaying is at a very early stage.

Attainment over time

■ Senior leaders are beginning to develop more robust evidence of children's progress over time. They meet regularly with teachers to review children's progress. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers in accurately identifying achievement of a level to ensure overall attainment data is more robust. As yet, the school does not have information on children's progress across all curriculum areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

◼ Senior leaders have introduced new approaches to tracking children's achievements within and out with school. Staff have taken positive steps to support children who have limited or no wider achievement by establishing activities in school. Across the school, children demonstrate responsibility through different leadership roles. This includes children at P2, who act as buddies to younger children and children in P7 who are voted to be house and vice captains. Children also lead on a range of learner participation groups. Children assist at the monthly community café developing their communication skills. Children need to be clearer about the skills they are developing through their achievements within and out with school. Staff should review their tracking approaches to ensure all children develop key skills and enjoy success across a wide range of contexts.

Equity for all learners

◼ Children who experience challenges or barriers to their learning are making progress in their attainment as a result of additional staffing and resources to support identified interventions. Senior leaders should continue with the early start to monitor and measure the impact of the additional funding on improving outcomes for children.

School Empowerment

■ **Empowering the school community**

■ Senior leaders are developing a culture where staff are empowered to be involved in the process of change. As confidence has grown, more teachers are engaging in lead roles to develop key aspects of the curriculum. Staff self-select areas matched closely to their expertise and experience.

■ Children are empowered to develop aspects of the life of the school through the recently established learner participation groups. This has led to changes to school catering. Members of the pupil council also attend the senior leadership team meetings on a monthly basis. The headteacher is also developing helpful links with both parent council and children to support the organisation of a range of fundraising events. Children need increased opportunities to use these developing skills more regularly to lead their own learning.

■ The headteacher empowers parents to lead on ideas and suggestions to support both children and their families. She has facilitated a self-support group for parents of children with additional support needs which parents now run. In addition, she encourages parents to support a range of learning experiences for children.

■ The headteacher has started to establish key partnerships with local community groups to support children's experiences. This includes the local rotary club who support transport for the children and local builders who support key aspects of children's learning. In moving forward, the headteacher plans to use a range of partnerships to develop further the Uryside curriculum.

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.