

Summarised inspection findings

Noss Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

11 February 2020

Key contextual information

Noss Primary School is a mainstream primary school situated in the town of Wick, The Highland Council. The school roll is 340 with over 30% of children living in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 1. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for one week.

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

- The learning environment throughout the school is bright and welcoming. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and, in almost all instances, children are polite and respectful. Staff use the school's values, which are a visual feature in all classes, well to encourage positive behaviour. The school is developing a range of approaches to children's emotional development. These support the calm and nurturing ethos. Staff should embed these approaches more fully, and consistently, across the school.
- Almost all children are attentive and engage with their learning. Staff make use of the extensive school campus to provide children with a range of learning environments. Children are motivated in their learning by the use of digital technologies such as interactive whiteboards.
- In the majority of lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear. Teachers share the purpose of learning with children in most lessons. This supports children to know what they are learning and why. Teachers should embed this practice consistently and provide children with more opportunities to lead their own learning through, for example, open-ended tasks.
- Overall, learning and teaching is not yet of a consistently high quality across the school. Teachers' planned learning does not yet meet all individual children's needs well enough. There is a need, across the school, to increase the pace and challenge of learning at all stages to ensure children make the best possible progress. Teachers need to make more effective use of questioning to extend children's thinking and relate learning to real life. Children need to better understand the relevance and purpose of their learning.
- At the upper stages, children work collaboratively in activities such as the Dragon's Den challenge. This supports them to learn how to share their ideas and work in groups with others.
- Children are not yet able to talk confidently about their learning. Teachers provide effective written feedback in children's writing tasks, relating strengths and next steps to success criteria. Teachers should continue with their plans to develop increased opportunities for children to reflect on their learning and ensure that feedback is effective in other curricular areas. Children need to be better supported to identify how they can make improvements to their work.

- Teachers make effective use of cluster and local authority progression frameworks to plan children's learning. They should continue with their plans to make better use of the National Benchmarks in the school's planning and assessment processes.
- Teachers maintain information about children's individual progress within Curriculum for Excellence levels, in literacy and numeracy. The school's key assessment tasks provide teachers with further information on how well children are progressing in their learning. Teachers are developing their use of an increasing range of diagnostic assessments. Regular attainment meetings support teachers to track and monitor children's progress, potential barriers to their learning and wellbeing. These activities produce a wide range of information on children's progress. Teachers should streamline their processes for gathering data on children's attainment. They need supported to analyse more robustly the information and subsequently plan learning which better meets children's needs.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- The majority of children achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels across literacy and numeracy in P1, P4 and P7.
- Data provided by the school accurately reflects the school's professional judgements of attainment in literacy. However, the data for numeracy is not yet sufficiently robust. Teachers should continue to develop their confidence in making professional judgements about children's progress through making better use of standardised assessment data and engaging in more robust moderation activities internally and with external partners.

Literacy and English

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory. The school needs to raise children's attainment in literacy across all stages.

Listening and talking

- At all stages, almost all children listen attentively and follow instructions. At early level, most identify and suggest rhyming words. A majority can confidently respond to and ask appropriate questions, take turns and express their views. At first level, most children talk clearly in a group and present to their class. They speak confidently about their views and can identify the difference between fact and opinion. At second level, children can communicate clearly and respectfully. At second level, children are not able to identify the skills of effective listening and talking. Children need to develop their confidence in building on each other's views and articulating and justifying their opinions.

Reading

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is satisfactory.
- A majority of children at early level are making progress in identifying initial letter sounds and are using this knowledge to blend sounds and build words. They talk about the features of a book and talk about characters and events. At first level, a majority of children read with fluency, expression and confidence. The majority of children understand the use of punctuation to support their reading. Most children use effective strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Children answer literal questions and a few answer inferential questions. They identify the difference between fact and opinion. At second level, a majority of children read with fluency and confidence. They talk about the features of non-fiction texts such as the contents page and glossary. Children, particularly at the second level, need to develop their ability to articulate their reading skills. Children are not yet able to confidently speak about authors or genres they enjoy. Children now need to apply their skills more effectively when undertaking research.

Writing

- By the end of early level, most children use capital letters and spaces between words. Most can form letters and attempt to spell familiar words correctly. They need to develop their use of full stops consistently in their sentences. At first level, children write for a variety of purposes, including for real life. A majority of children can identify nouns and adjectives. They use adjectives well to make their writing more interesting. At second level, children explore a range of different genres and use a variety of planning formats to organise their ideas. The majority of children write at an appropriate length. Children need to extend their writing skills across other curricular areas. In a majority of classes, children are building on their writing skills, for example by using interesting sentence openers. A few children need increased opportunities to discuss, and review, their writing skills to support them to be clearer about what they need to do to improve their writing.

Numeracy

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, Money and Measure

- At early level, almost all children can identify numbers to ten. A few correctly identify how many would make a pattern which adds up to ten. Most children successfully add one more to numbers up to five. Almost all children recognise, and have made a positive start to writing, numerals to ten. At first level, most children are confident in adding three digit numbers and explaining their thinking. They understand the importance of zero as a place holder in four digit whole numbers. At second level, most children are confident in using their knowledge of place value to round whole numbers to 1000, 10,000 and 100,000. Most children understand the link between fractions, decimals and percentages and identify equivalent forms of each. Across the school, most children are making good progress in telling the time and applying this to real life applications.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children can recognise and sort two-dimensional shapes. Most at first level, can describe three-dimensional objects and their properties. They can identify examples of three-dimensional objects in the environment. At second level, most children describe a range of angles using mathematical language and accurately measure and draw angles. Across the school, children need to consolidate their knowledge of shape, position and movement concepts to improve further children's attainment.

Information handling

- At early level, most children are confident in recognising tally marks in real life contexts as a way of gathering information. Most can interpret simple charts and pictograms. At first level, most children accurately construct bar graphs. They describe confidently the process of collecting and presenting information. At second level, children are confidently using real life contexts in presenting information using an increasing variety of graphs and pie charts. A few children are developing their skills in presenting data digitally.

Attainment over time

- Data provided by the school is accurate and shows that overall children are making satisfactory progress from their prior levels of attainment. For the last few years children's attainment and achievement has fluctuated, with no significant indication of improvement over time. As children move through the school, there is a need to improve consistently their attainment, particularly in aspects of literacy.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Teachers celebrate children's personal achievements at school assemblies and in displays throughout the school. Children are developing their confidence in trying new activities in the

range of after school clubs. They are developing their leadership and communication skills when undertaking roles of responsibility, such as junior road safety officers. Curricular areas such as drama and PE support children well to develop their skills in sports and in expressing themselves. Teachers should continue with their plans to track and monitor children's skills development within their achievements more robustly. This should include maintaining an overview of children not attending clubs or activities to ensure no children are at risk of missing out.

Equity for all learners

- The school has spent the majority of its Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) on additional pupil support assistant (PSA) hours. The PSA hours provide a range of interventions to support children most affected by deprivation. Initial evidence shows that this is resulting in these children making improved progress in their learning. PSAs supervise children during lunchtime, which is overly long in the early years. A degree of time is lost each morning to 'soft starts' which do not provide effective opportunities for children's learning. The school should continue with their plans to review the length, and planning, of the school day to help ensure that PEF better supports improvements in children's 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.