

# Summarised inspection findings

Oyne Primary School

Aberdeenshire Council

5 March 2024

## Key contextual information

Oyne Primary School is located in the village of Oyne, Aberdeenshire. Forty-three children attend the school across three classes. There are children at every stage. The school roll has fallen in recent years, the school will move to two multi-stage classes later this year as a result of this change in roll.

The school has experienced a number of staffing changes this session. The current headteacher is also headteacher at another small school within the cluster and has been in post since September 2023. The local authority is taking forward plans to make the current shared headship a permanent arrangement.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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 recently appointed headteacher has rightly identified the need to improve approaches to learning and teaching across the school. She has taken initial steps to support staff to evaluate and develop learning spaces within the school. However, the quality of children's experiences is not yet of a sufficiently high enough standard. The pace of learning is too slow across the school resulting in most children disengaging from their learning. In most classes, planned activities do not meet the needs of all learners. The headteacher and staff now need to take forward at pace plans to improve children's learning experiences. In taking this forward, staff need to engage in professional learning to develop further their understanding of the features of high-quality learning and teaching. This should include planning learning that builds well on what children know.
- The headteacher and staff team works well together to provide a warm and caring environment. Staff model respectful relationships and behaviours. The headteacher has identified the need to develop further this ethos to ensure all children interact well together during break times. She is supporting staff well to develop the skills to help children to manage disagreements effectively. Staff now need to set clear standards and higher expectations for appropriate behaviours during lessons.
- The school values are visible around the school. Staff are beginning to support children to embed and enact these values. A few children do not always feel they are listened to or that all adults are approachable.
- The school is valued by the local community and included in local events and activities. Children are motivated by their involvement in these community events, for example, the local scarecrow competition. They enjoy providing members of the community with vegetables they grow in the school garden. The Parent Council is active in raising funds for the school. Parents

and the local community support the school well. They have raised funds for resources to support learning and teaching and the development of outdoor learning.

- The headteacher is beginning to work with teachers to agree the features of effective learning and teaching. In most lessons, teachers share what is to be learned. However, children are not yet able to articulate the purpose of their learning or talk confidently about what they need to do to be successful. The staff team needs to review the planning of learning and teaching to ensure activities and tasks are sufficiently challenging and meet children's needs and interests. Staff should increase their expectations for what children can achieve. This should include the pace at which they can work and the quality of their written presentation.
- Teachers have engaged in self-evaluation of the learning spaces within the school. They have taken positive steps to ensure resources are more accessible for children and to make classrooms less cluttered. This is beginning to support children to be more independent in their learning. The school environment offers good spaces for learning and play. The extensive well-equipped outdoor area offers rich opportunities for high-quality experiences. Children can access a well-stocked library. Staff now need to make more effective use of the spaces across the school to motivate and engage children in their learning.
- Children do not experience sufficiently high-quality learning and teaching. In a majority of lessons explanations are clear. However, teachers do not always ensure children are listening or engaged. Staff are developing skills in using questioning to check children's understanding and promote curiosity and exploration. They should continue to develop approaches to providing feedback to children that helps children understand their next steps and promotes independence in their learning. Children's written work is stored in a variety of places. Staff should review and streamline this to help children see and understand their own learning and progress.
- All children have access to digital tools including tablets and laptops. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well during direct teaching to provide examples and instructions. Older children are confident using search engines in research tasks, for example, in finding out about cultures and faiths across the world. They need support in choosing reliable sources, and in summarising their findings in their own words. Staff should monitor children's use of digital devices to ensure these are being used appropriately for the planned learning. This includes in ensuring children are on task, and that the quality of their work is of an appropriate standard.
- Teachers are at the early stages of introducing play in the younger class. Staff should engage further with national guidance and research on play pedagogy to develop a shared understanding of how young children learn and develop. This should include exploration of effective play opportunities in multi-stage classes.
- The headteacher recognises the assessment information teachers gather is not always valid and reliable. She has taken positive steps to improve approaches to assessing children's progress in learning. This includes the introduction of a more systematic approach to assessment. She has worked with staff to develop guidance on when and how standardised and summative assessments should be used. Teachers are beginning to use data from these assessments to gather evidence of children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Teachers now need to use assessment information to inform their plans for learning and teaching across the curriculum.
- Teachers have recently engaged in moderation activity with local schools. They should continue to work with staff within and beyond their school to develop further their

understanding of national standards and expectations.

- Teachers do not use a consistent approach to plan learning across the school. As a result, there are gaps in children's learning and progress. Planning approaches to mathematics do not ensure children build on prior learning at regular intervals. Teachers should ensure children experience high-quality writing experiences across a range of genre. The staff team should work together to review, refresh and streamline approaches to planning learning. This should support improved progress in all aspects of children's learning. The staff team should make more effective use of progression pathways to ensure children learning across the curriculum. This will support them to offer children a broad and balanced learning experiences in all areas of the curriculum.
- The headteacher has recently adapted approaches to tracking children's progress in learning. This includes a greater focus on children supported through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) and those who require additional support. This is not yet leading to improved outcomes for identified children. The headteacher has identified the need to engage in more regular, rigorous discussions with staff about the progress of individual children and year groups. The team should work together to use data gathered, to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. This will support all staff to better understand and use the learning, teaching and moderation cycle.

## 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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 number of children at each stage varies and is relatively small. Overall statements have been made about attainment and progress to ensure individuals are not identified.
- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is weak. Across the school, children are capable of making better progress. Teachers' judgements on children's attainment are not supported by robust evidence of progress. Staff are aware that increased use of national Benchmarks and moderation activity will support teachers to make increasingly reliable judgements about children's progress and attainment.
- Children receiving targeted support to improve aspects of literacy and numeracy are making satisfactory progress against their individual targets.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children make insufficient progress in literacy and English.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school a majority of children listen well to adults. They follow simple instructions in day-to-day class routines. Most children require support to listen to other children during group and class discussions. They are not yet skilled at listening to and building on the views and opinions of others. Older children are confident and articulate. They are ready for greater challenge in listening and talking, for example, through debating and leading presentations.

### Reading

- Younger children identify initial sounds. They retell familiar stories using small world toys and pictures. They are not yet confident blending sounds or reading simple words. As children move through the school, they choose books from the library. A majority are developing their fluency and a few use expression well when reading aloud. Older children talk passionately about books they read at home. They share their preferences for certain authors and types of books. Across the school, children are not reading appropriately challenging texts. Older children need to develop their confidence in answering increasingly complex questions about the texts they are reading.

### Writing

- A majority of younger children form letters correctly. They are not yet writing simple words independently or creating their own stories with adult support. As children move through the school, they write for a limited range of purposes. They explain the features of imaginative writing and talk positively about writing their own stories at home. Most children are not yet skilled at using spelling rules, punctuation or capital letters well in their written work. Children

do not write at length regularly. Teachers need to take prompt action to address this area of children's learning.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, a majority of children are making insufficient progress with numeracy and mathematics.

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

- Younger children count forward and backwards within ten. They recognise groups of objects to ten and are beginning to explore addition. As children move through the school, they use a range of strategies to add and subtract mentally. Older children read, write and order six-digit numbers. They recognise and write time using 12 and 24 hour notation. Across the school children are not yet confident in applying learning in new and unfamiliar contexts. At all stages, children are capable of achieving more.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Younger children sort three-dimensional objects using simple properties such as rolls, does not roll. As children move through the school, they name simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects using appropriate mathematical language. Older children are developing their understanding of angles. They measure angles accurately using a protractor. At all stages, children are capable of achieving more.

### **Information handling**

- During the inspection there was limited evidence of children developing skills in information handling. Children are aware of ways to gather information, for example, through questionnaires and surveys. However, they are not yet able to explain ways to display data or how to use data effectively.

### **Attainment over time**

- The headteacher has rightly identified attainment over time data is not always robust or accurate. However, she has identified trends over time where children's attainment significantly declines. She has taken positive steps to develop further systems to track children's progress and attainment. This is at the very early stages of supporting teachers develop further their understanding of national standards. The headteacher should monitor closely the accuracy of assessment information.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Older children value their roles as house captains. They enjoy leading their house in learning circle discussions about current events and sharing their views. Children in P7 are buddies for children in P1. They articulate well their role in helping young children to settle into school and develop independence. All children take on the role of 'quality improvement people' across the school year. They take a lead role in taking a closer look at aspects of school life. The headteacher should take forward plans to develop this role further. She should ensure children develop skills in evaluating their school, communicating their views and planning projects that lead to meaningful change.
- Teachers track children's participation in events and activities within and outwith the school. Staff use the data gathered to identify children who are at risk of missing out. They plan activities within the school day and at lunchbreaks to ensure all children can participate in a range of sporting and cultural experiences. For example, children participated in judo sessions and attended specialist music workshops. A few older children develop their musical skills through individual violin lessons and input from a visiting music specialist. As a result, all children have participated in two or more activities. Staff should continue to track children's

achievements and help children to identify the skills and attributes they are developing through their participation.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff are at the early stages of analysing attainment data to identify gaps in learning for cohorts of learners, for example children who require additional support and children who receive free school meals. PEF has been used to purchase resources for targeted interventions. Pupil support staff work well with individual children to provide targeted support for aspects of literacy and numeracy. There is not yet clear evidence of this work closing the poverty- related attainment gap. The headteacher and staff should now use the data gathered to accelerate progress for all children, including those facing the greatest challenge.



## Other relevant evidence

- The headteacher monitors attendance closely. She provides timely support for children when attendance levels begin to fall. This support includes close working with families to understand the individual circumstances and challenges they face. She also makes helpful links with other agencies to ensure children attend school regularly. As a result, attendance at Oyne Primary School has been above the national average for the last three years. A few parents have chosen flexi-schooling arrangements for their children, in line with the local authority policy. The local authority and headteacher should continue to monitor the impact of these arrangements on children's wellbeing and progress.

## 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.