Summarised inspection findings

Portessie Primary School

The Moray Council

19 June 2018

Key contextual information

Portessie Primary School is located in the coastal town of Portessie in Buckie. The school is known locally as the Slochie School. At the time of the inspection, the roll was 88 children across four classes.

1.3 Leadership of change	satisfactory

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

- The school's motto of "Success for all" together with their SLOCHIE values is well known by staff, children and parents. The headteacher and staff have helped children develop an understanding of the values (safe, learning to achieve, responsible caring and nurtured, healthy and active, included and everyone respected) through a range of activities such assemblies and whole school rewards schemes. As a result, children are able to talk about the values. A few children identified the wellbeing indicators (safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured active, respected, responsible, and included) as easier to understand. Staff should now build on children's understanding of the school's values to help them apply them to day-to-day practice.

- The headteacher and staff have a good understanding of the strengths of children. Staff use a range of information and data to monitor the progress of children in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Staff are proactive in implementing interventions and supports for those children who do not make expected progress. Staff should build on current approaches to monitoring and tracking the progress of all children and ensure approaches result in improved attainment and achievement for all.

- Staff are able to demonstrate that they know children well and have a good understanding of their social and economic context. Portessie School is located within the coastal area of Buckie and there is scope for staff to make better use this unique context to plan relevant and interesting learning experiences. The headteacher has developed positive working partnerships with a range of stakeholders and businesses in the local community. The school should build on these partnerships to help children understand the skills they will need beyond school.

- The headteacher has in place a range of approaches to evaluate the work of the school and identify priorities for improvement. An annual calendar is in place detailing activities to determine the quality of the work of the school such as learning and teaching observations. Teachers are involved in activities to identify areas for improvement. There is evidence of how identified priorities and actions have led to improvements. For example, staff identified the need to improve behaviour and relationships of a few children in some classes and subsequent staff training was undertaken in nurture and behaviour associated with autistic spectrum disorders. This is having a positive impact on managing the behaviour of a few

children and improving their engagement. The headteacher, together with staff, should review and improve current approaches to self-evaluation to ensure that staff, parents, children and other stakeholders are better involved in evaluating the work of the school and identifying what needs to improve. Staff should engage further with national guidance such as How Good is Our School? 4 to help develop staff's understanding of the purpose of self-evaluation within school improvement. There needs to be clearer strategies in place to ensure that planned outcomes for learners are being achieved and that the improvements are having the intended impact.

- Staff have opportunities to lead on aspects of school improvement and other initiatives. For example, the recent transition project between the on-site playgroup and P1, led by staff, has resulted in improved transitions. The headteacher recognises that staff are willing and able to be more fully involved in leadership roles across the school.

- Staff across the school have appropriate opportunities to undertake professional learning activities. For example, moderation activities with other schools is enabling teaching staff to develop a better understanding of expected standards of writing and agree shared standards across the school. All staff can identify how recent training related to additional support needs is helping their understanding and improving their practice.

- Children have opportunities to develop leadership skills through the pupil council, house captains, prefects and buddies. These leadership opportunities involve senior pupils. There is scope to expand opportunities for children across the school to be further involved in whole school initiatives and to take on leadership responsibilities. In addition, children would benefit from further guidance to enable them to carry out their current leadership roles effectively and to help them understand the skills they are developing whilst undertaking these roles.

<table>
<tr><td>**2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment**</td><td>satisfactory</td></tr>
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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

■ Across the school, there are positive relationships between staff and children. Children feel that staff support them in their learning. Overall, almost all children are purposefully engaged in their learning and are eager to improve. Where teaching is most effective, learning tasks are differentiated to ensure all children are challenged and supported in their learning. This is not yet a consistent feature of practice across all classes. There is scope to build on existing approaches to differentiation. This will allow children to make even better progress in their learning. Some lessons are well paced and retain the interest of children whilst other lack pace and challenge.

■ In a few lessons observed, children had an opportunity to take responsibility for leading their learning. There is scope to develop this further. Many children have the ability to lead their own learning and would benefit from being empowered to do so. Teachers need to provide greater opportunities for children to engage in active learning where they have a chance to identify and evaluate the skills that they are developing. There is scope for children to be given more opportunities to make predictions, summarise information and challenge each other's thinking. There is scope to review the ways in which children secure their understanding of themselves as learners. This would support children's skills in talking about themselves as learners, identifying their strengths and areas for development.

■ In all classes, teachers use digital technologies effectively to share intended learning. Interactive whiteboards are used as a teaching tool to enhance learning and teaching. There is scope to extend the use of digital technologies to ensure all learners can independently access digital technology to support and challenge all areas of their learning, for example in using applications to support learners to access texts, handle data and use spreadsheets.

■ Some children are able to talk about their involvement in school committees but they were not always clear about the impact of the activities on the life and work of the school. There is scope to develop the ways in which children can shape aspects of the school by assuming leadership roles which lead to improvements. Children would benefit from increased opportunities where they are empowered to take decisions, initiate and organise tasks and demonstrate resilience. A few children can talk about the skills they are developing in their learning and how these skills will help them beyond school. Children across the school would benefit from gaining a better understanding about skills for life, learning and work.

■ In most lessons, staff share the purpose of lessons through learning intentions. As a result, most children can describe the tasks they are engaged in. The majority of children can identify what success might look like. Learning intentions and success criteria should be better framed so that they connect directly to what children are learning. A few children can identify the skills that they are developing through their learning experiences. A more direct

connection between activities and skills would support children's understanding of the skills they have developed.

- In the majority of lessons, staff make effective use of questioning to encourage children to think and to explain their learning. Children would benefit from staff sharing this good practice across the school to ensure all enjoy consistently high-quality questioning which supports higher order thinking. This would also help to provide greater levels of challenge for all learners and ensure increased breadth, depth and application of learning.

- In most classes, teachers provide verbal feedback to children on their learning. This regularly encourages children to focus on tasks. Written feedback is given by staff for almost all tasks. This is not yet of a consistently high quality. All feedback, including written feedback, needs to focus on children's learning and what they need to do to improve. Consistent approaches to giving high-quality feedback would help to support parents' and carers' understanding of their child's progress and targets in learning. Overall, children are not yet able to talk confidently about their own learning and their personal targets. Children would benefit from more opportunities to engage in conversations about learning.

- The unique context of the school offers opportunities for learning outdoors. Teachers should consider the four contexts for learning in planning for experiences for all children. Children would benefit from further opportunities to learn within the context of their close proximity of the sea. The school is within walking distance from the sea and coastline and children are not able to identify opportunities they have for learning in this setting.

- Teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the strengths of children. Regular formal and informal discussions with the headteacher about learning are a feature of practice. These discussions now need to have a greater focus on raising attainment and identifying supports and interventions that will help children achieve even better. The school uses a wide range of assessment information to monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy. All teachers regularly discuss assessment information with the headteacher. This information is used to identify those children who require additional support or challenge in their learning. Targeted interventions are put in place for those children who require them. The school should now review its approaches to measuring and tracking the impact of targeted interventions. Teachers now need to consider how they make better use of this information to improve children's attainment.

- Staff regularly share their understanding of expected national standards in literacy and numeracy with each other. Teachers meet regularly to moderate children's writing. There is scope to develop and extend this approach to include sharing standards in numeracy and in all areas of literacy. Staff would benefit from wider engagement with the national benchmarks to support teachers' professional judgement. Teachers have recently started to engage with national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy and are at the very early stages of engagement with the benchmarks for the other curricular areas.

- The school uses a range of data to inform its understanding of individual learner progress. Staff should now be supported to use this data to plan learning, teaching and assessment, which ensures appropriate pace and challenge for all learners across the school. Teachers are beginning to use the Moray Council tracking tool to monitor children's progress in writing. The school has correctly planned to extend this tool to all areas of literacy and numeracy.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning and development pathways

■ The school has in place a clear curriculum rationale and curriculum plan, which provides appropriate and detailed information such as subject areas, principles for curriculum design and approaches to learning and teaching. The curriculum plan also helpfully provides additional information, which underpins the school's motto of Success for All. Staff should consider sharing this information with children and parents/carers to help them understand what they need to do to achieve success. Staff should now consider how they can review their curriculum and rationale to reflect their commitment to raising attainment.

■ Progression frameworks are in place for some subjects. These frameworks allow staff to plan activities which takes account of prior learning. The school needs to review how these frameworks are used to plan learning for all children and ensure that the frameworks are not slowing the pace of learning or preventing children from learning across a wide range of contexts. The use of frameworks should be reviewed within the context of raising attainment for all.

■ Staff would benefit from a further review of how they deliver some areas of the curriculum to ensure that children across all stages have access to high quality learning in all subjects and through outdoor learning. For example, neither staff nor children were able to identify how they use the unique setting of the school, within walking distance to the sea, to provide a context for learning. Learning experiences do not always provide the appropriate level of differentiation and there are missed opportunities for children to lead learning and learn within group situations.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ The school engages well with parents and, overall, parents are satisfied with how the school communicates with them. Parents feel that the homework diaries are positive in helping them support their child's learning. In inspection questionnaires, almost all parents reported positively on how the school helps their child in areas such as keeping healthy and developing confidence. Most parents feel that staff know children well and are able to support their wellbeing. A few parents are not satisfied with how the school deals with incidents of bullying and with how they communicate with parents about these incidents. A few parents have said that they would like more information about how they can help their child with their learning. The school should continue with its plans to improve how parents can become more involved in supporting their child's learning. The school should also explore the use of digital technology to enable parents to become more involved in what their child is learning.

■ The school has an active Parent Council which supports the work of the school well. The focus of the group has been primarily related to fundraising and there is scope to further involve this group of parents in whole school issues and school improvement.

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	satisfactory

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

■ Children across the school are able to identify how the school is helping them keep safe and healthy. They know about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They are able to talk about the risks associated with social media and identify behaviour and substances that are harmful. Children are less confident in understanding aspects of relationships, mental health and sexual health. Staff have recognised the need to review and revise their health and wellbeing programmes. There is a need to help children build resilience and develop positive relationships with each other. The school would benefit from revisiting their SLOCHIE values to help children understand how these can impact on their day-to-day lives. A few children we spoke to during the inspection were clear that they had a good understanding of the wellbeing indicators that the school previously shared with them and that the introduction of the SLOCHIE values was sometimes confusing. Staff should also consider how they can help children develop opportunities to think and talk about their emotions. Staff recognise the need to better monitor and track pupils' progress in the area of health and wellbeing to help them further improve outcomes.

■ The school has correctly identified those children who require additional support in their learning. They engage well with parents and partners to assess the needs of children and provide appropriate supports and interventions. This is resulting in positive outcomes for some children. Class teachers identify specific targets within IEPs. However, it is not always clear how these targets will be measured or if children understand their targets. The school should review its approaches to identifying and supporting children with who have additional support needs. The local authority has in place a staged intervention approach with clear guidelines as to the expected levels of supports and interventions. Staff would benefit from professional learning related to supporting children with additional support needs. Written information about the needs of children and strategies to overcome barriers to learning would ensure all staff have a better understanding of how to best meet the needs of children.

■ The majority of children say that they feel safe in school. A few children say that they do not feel safe and that bullying impacts on their wellbeing. They are not able to articulate how the school has addressed bullying in a positive way such as part of personal and social education, during assemblies or with anti-bullying events. A few children feel that bullying is not being dealt with appropriately. Some parents reported that the school deals well with bullying whilst less than half of the parents who completed questionnaires felt that the school does not deal well with bullying. We have asked the school to work with children and parents to improve relationships and eliminate bullying. Staff would benefit from engaging with recent national anti-bullying guidance to help them improve practices and procedures, including how incidents are reported and recorded.

- Children across the school are benefitting from two hours of statutory physical education (PE). In addition, they participate in a range of activities targeted at improving their health and fitness. Children participate in the daily mile four times each week. We have discussed with the school how it might further improve this initiative.

- Staff have a clear understanding of the importance in ensuring that all children are included in all aspects of school life. Staff can demonstrate how targeted support and interventions have improved outcomes for some children such as improved engagement and behaviour and increased attendance. The headteacher, together with staff, monitors the attainment of children who face particular barriers to their learning. Children reported that they did not always feel respected by other children. They identified how the behaviour of some children impacted on their learning and wellbeing and they felt that incidents were not always dealt with in a fair and just manner. Some children felt that they did not have opportunities to share their views, take on leadership roles or be part of whole school decision making. Children are very articulate and proud of their school. They are willing and able to be more involved in improving the culture and ethos.

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, children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. The school is able to provide a range of evidence to support these judgements such as standardised assessments and samples of children's work. In addition, we observed children's learning and spoke to focus groups of children.

Overall progress in literacy
- Most children are attaining expected Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in literacy and English. Most children are making satisfactory progress from their prior levels of attainment. There is scope for a significant number of children to be achieving better. Children who require additional support with their learning make appropriate progress from their prior levels of learning.

Listening and Talking
- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking. At the early stages, children are able to listen carefully to each other in whole class learning or when working in pairs or small groups. A few children are not yet able to do this independently. Across the school almost all children listen effectively and can communicate well with each other. Almost all children are able to express their thoughts and feelings well. Almost all children working towards second level in P6 and P7 listen respectfully to each other. In all classes, a few children are not always respectful listeners when their peers are talking. Across the school, children would benefit from additional opportunities to formulate and justify their opinions and thoughts in a variety of contexts. A number of children at P6 and P7 have noted that they would welcome opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills as they contribute to improvements in the life and work of the school.

Reading
- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in their reading. Across the school, children are enthusiastic about reading for pleasure. The school has recently focused on helping children read and engage with books. Displays in corridors and in the library highlight and celebrate a range of authors. There has been a focus on helping children access to books that appeal to different groups of children. As a result, almost all children are enthusiastic about books and are developing a love of reading. Children working towards early level engage well with books and can talk about the characters and events in stories. They are confidently able to read text in books. Children at P4 working towards first level can talk about their favourite author and give reasons for their choice. At first and second levels, the majority of children read aloud with confidence and are able to use intonation and expression to support understanding of a text. Most children working towards second level can discuss

character, structure and style in relation to the books they are reading. The majority can justify their reading preferences in talking to their peers. They regularly select books for pleasure and for research. There is scope to give children more choice in selecting their group novels or reading texts. Some children working at first and second levels would benefit from more challenging opportunities to analyse and evaluate stories and texts and to give their own ideas about the writer's messages and themes.

Writing
- Most children are making satisfactory progress in their writing. Almost all children working at early level are able to write in a range of contexts. They are developing their knowledge well about using simple punctuation in their writing. Children working towards first level are developing skills in how to improve their writing such as using interesting words to start sentences. Almost all children working within first level are presenting their writing well, using the correct grammar. By P7, the majority of children are able to write at length and for a variety of purposes. They are given regular opportunities to write with clear learning intentions, success criteria and are given feedback. Teachers should collaborate to agree on a whole school approach to providing feedback and the ways in which they will support children to respond to this. At all stages, children can talk about the tools they need for writing and are regularly given opportunities to reflect on their use of these tools. The school should continue to focus on developing children's spelling skills. Across all stages of the school, staff should develop the range of opportunities for children to apply their writing skills in a variety of real-life contexts. Moderation activities in writing within the associated schools group is helping develop staff understanding about achievement of CfE levels.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics
- Attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory with most children achieving expected CfE levels. There is scope for children to attain even better in numeracy and mathematics. Staff should consider how differentiated approaches to teaching and learning, more challenging learning opportunities and a brisker pace could lead to better attainment. During the inspection week, almost all children were involved in tasks related to information handling.

Number, money and measure
- Children at early level are developing an understanding of numbers to 10. They are consolidating their understanding before moving to subtraction or other aspects of numeracy. Staff should ensure that the pace of learning is appropriate to enable all children to progress and achieve their expected level by the end of P1. Children working towards achieving first level in P2 are able to complete additions and subtractions up to 20. They can identify and add coins up to 10p. They are developing a good understanding of number patterns. As they continue to work within early level, children understand the value of digits in whole numbers. They can successfully add multiples of ten and multiples of one hundred to three digit numbers. As they progress towards achieving first level, children are working appropriately with numbers within thousands. They are applying their skills well in addition and subtraction in a range of situations. Children at P5 who are working within second level are able to add and subtract money and successfully work out change. They are able to understand the relationship between fractions and division and can calculate fractions such as ¼ of 20. They would benefit from further consolidation to help their understanding and application of fractions. Children in P6 and P7 working towards second level have a good understanding of decimal fractions and can order decimals by their value add and subtract and divide decimal fractions. Children at P7 are able to successfully work out problems related to time, money

and number operations. Children at all stages would benefit from further opportunities to develop their understanding of measure.

Shape, position and movement
■ Children working at early level can recognise and describe shapes and are developing an understanding of positional language such as left and right. Children working within first level are successfully able to identify 2-D shapes and 3-D objects and correctly identify the properties of shapes. They would benefit from further consolidation of other properties of shapes such as edges and vertices. At second level children are able to identify and draw lines of symmetry on a range of shapes and are confident in naming and measure different angles.

Information handling
■ Children working towards early level are able to sort sets of information into groups and display the information to enable them to compare what they have found. Most children approaching first level are able to conduct their own simple surveys to enable them to gather data and display it using a bar graph. At second level children able to extract information from bar graphs, identify good ways of displaying information and conduct their own surveys to devise bar graphs. Children would benefit from more challenging learning in the area of information handling and opportunities to collect and sort data within relevant and real life contexts.

Problem solving
■ Almost all children are able to correctly work out problems related to money, measurement and time appropriate to their level. They are confident in using both mental and written strategies to help them and can talk about how they solved their problems. A few children would benefit from further opportunities to improve their problem solving strategies.

Attainment over time
■ The school is able to provide data related to CfE levels over three years. Due to the very small numbers of pupils at each stage, the data shown as percentages that achieve levels is not always reliable in evidencing patterns of attainment over time.

Overall quality of learner's achievement
■ Children are provided with a range of opportunities in order to achieve success in different contexts. Some children participate in cross-country competitions with other schools. The introduction of the daily mile has helped some children improve their physical fitness and develop an interest in cross-country to allow them to participate and achieve success.

■ Children at P6 and P7 are extending their friendship groups and participating in a range of challenging outdoor pursuits through joint residential trips with children from the three neighbouring schools. The school should ensure that all children have opportunities to attend both trips and the cost does not prevent children from taking part.

■ A group of P7 children have recently participated in sports coach training and have started to use their skills by organising lunchtime clubs. The school should continue to maximise opportunities for children to use these skills.

■ The school recognises the benefits of using local facilities to help children develop skills in sport. Children are taking part in golf and cricket sessions at local clubs to help improve their physical fitness and develop an interest in a range of sports.

- Staff help children celebrate, through school assemblies, what they have achieved out of school. The school should now track these achievements to determine the range of experiences children are receiving. They should work with children and parents to provide opportunities for wider achievements.

Equality for all Learners

- The headteacher and staff have a good knowledge of the strengths and needs of all children across the school. Tracking and monitoring approaches help staff identify supports and interventions. There are examples how these interventions are improving children's progress in literacy. Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) is being used to implement nurture training for staff and this is helping a few children engage better with their learning. There is scope to improve approaches to tracking and monitoring the progress and attainment of all children across the school to ensure they are reaching their full potential and are attaining and achieving as highly as possible.

Choice of QI: 2.6 Transitions

- ■ Arrangements to support learners and their families
- ■ Collaborative planning and delivery
- ■ Continuity and progression in learning

■ The school has a strong commitment to supporting learners and their families, including at the point of transition. Staff work effectively with key partners in Buckie High School and in Portessie Playgroup to support both learners and their families. Processes for planning for successful transitions into and from the school are effective. There are opportunities for children and their parents or carers to be involved in planning for transition. Information about children's learning, achievements and wellbeing is shared as part of the transition process. For those children who are likely to require additional support in transition, enhanced transition packages are put in pace to meet their needs. The school should evaluate its work to date to secure ongoing improvement in the process. This is likely to include consideration of the ways in which digital technologies could be used to improve communication and share information. The school now needs to work with its key transition partners to develop ways of consulting with parents and carers to ensure that transition arrangements meet their needs.

■ Planning for transition from Portessie Playgroup into the school is facilitated by the co-location of the early years' provision. Children from the playgroup regularly visit the school for example, using the gym hall and the P1 classroom. A recent transition project between the school and the playgroup has had a positive impact on ensuring continuity in learning and progression.

■ Senior students from Buckie High School visit the school each week as part of their planned work experience. These students provide role models for pupils. There is scope for the school to work collaboratively with its associated schools to plan for the ways in which work experience students might provide additional transition links.

■ Staff have identified that there is a need to review the arrangements for transition from class to class within the school. This would support teachers to plan progressive learning pathways for children and raise attainment for all.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.