

# Summarised inspection findings

**Premnay Primary School**

Aberdeenshire Council

27 August 2019

## Key contextual information

Premnay Primary School is a small, two teacher school in the rural village of Auchleven where most of its children live. The school had 44 children in two multi-composite classes comprising of 22 P1-4 children and 22 P5-7 children at the time of the inspection. The headteacher and a part time teacher share the P1-4 class. The school is part of the Huntly cluster with The Gordon Schools and 12 other primaries. It is also dual zoned with Inverurie Academy. Staff turnover over the past two years has slowed the school's progress in implementing its key priorities for improvement.

### 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 headteacher has a very clear vision for change and improvement which is relevant to the context of the school and its community. The school values and vision were created in consultation with staff, children and parents. These are promoted through assemblies, the daily life of the school and displayed throughout the school environment. Children are encouraged to share as part of the visual displays, real life examples of how they have reflected the school's values of respect, fairness, responsibility and working together.
- Across the school, staff are committed to becoming more reflective in their practice. They would benefit from more planned opportunities to observe good practice in teaching across the school. Working together as part of the community cluster has provided opportunities for staff to engage in focused professional dialogue, particularly in the area of moderating standards of children's learning. They reflect together on their current systems for planning, assessing and tracking children's progress. In continuing this collaborative approach, the school is well-placed to further develop more robust assessment approaches across the school. This will assist staff in pinpointing the steps they need to take to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy, and to further develop children's own sense of wellbeing.
- Children have experienced leadership opportunities within the school including, for example, within the pupil council, as playground leaders and buddies and as sports leaders. There is scope to explore further opportunities for children to take on leadership roles across a range of school and community related matters. The school has plans in place to further develop the ways in which children can influence change.
- While the priorities for improvement are relevant to the school and its unique community, the pace of implementation has been slow. Changes in staffing have reduced the time available for the headteacher to drive forward planning for continuous improvement. The school recognises that there is scope to develop opportunities for shared ownership and responsibility for leading and implementing changes across the school community. The school has plans to encourage and develop leadership opportunities for all staff and involve parents and wider community in the development of school improvement priorities.

- The school has clear plans in place to ensure strategic, systematic planning for continuous improvement. While some improvement targets are unmet, the school has successfully ensured that teachers are using national assessment data to identify learning skills and gaps in children's learning. This has enabled them to plan more effectively to meet children's needs. The school, has successfully protected time for collegiate learning and improved teachers understanding of National Improvement Framework priorities such as developing skills for work in a progressive way across the curriculum.
- The school has been successful in implementing improvement through well-received open afternoons and shared assemblies for parents where children now lead and share their learning. Staff have taken responsibility for improving transitions into P1 with extended visits to nursery, more visits to school and evening parent workshop in June. This is helping children to settle well when they move to primary school. One member of teaching staff is now working with The Tapestry Partnership to develop thinking skills. As a result, children in P1-4 are beginning to develop skills which help them to solve problems, share ideas and think in new and different ways.
- The headteacher ensures that teachers professional development and training reflects the school improvement priorities. For example, last session staff successfully completed training in digital technology and health and wellbeing. They now regularly enhance and support students learning through digital technology. This session staff have undertaken training in coding in mathematics within their community cluster. However, changes in staffing has made it harder to embed and sustain development.

## 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

- There is a positive and welcoming ethos in Premnay School where staff show commitment to the care and welfare of the children. Almost all children behave well and are kind and caring towards each other. There is a friendly atmosphere which results in most children enjoying coming to school. Staff and children demonstrate positive respectful relationships and almost all talk about their school with pride.
- Teachers plan well to meet the different needs of children. In most classes, teachers share intended learning and steps to success which focus on the needs of children. They engage children in dialogue reflecting on the intended learning at the end of the lesson. In the best examples, children are motivated and keen to learn when tasks are sufficiently engaging. In such circumstances, children are active participants in their learning. In other lessons there is scope to increase the pace of learning ensuring children are actively engaged in their learning. Teachers should share the good practice across the school to ensure that all children benefit from the strengths of the staff.
- In the best examples, children focus well on tasks, they work conscientiously and when given motivating contexts for learning, they work well independently and in small groups. This is not yet consistent across the school. There is scope for teachers to enable all children to become more independent in their learning and shape their experiences. Children have the skills and aptitude to take greater responsibility for their own learning.
- The headteacher recognises the need for a greater focus on ensuring consistently high quality learning experiences for all children. Staff should now move at pace to establish a shared understanding of high quality learning, teaching and assessment. These agreed approaches should be carefully monitored and evaluated by all to ensure positive outcomes for children.
- In the best examples, teachers provide clear expectations and instructions which link closely with learning activities. They use a range of learning and assessment strategies to engage children in the learning process. This is not yet consistent across the school. There is scope for teachers to develop further the range and type of questioning used in lessons to promote higher order thinking skills. This will support children to develop a depth of understanding across their learning.
- Children engage well in dialogue with adults relating to their learning, recording achievements in their e-portfolios. Parents and children speak positively about the quality of dialogue and enthusiasm for learning. Teachers should agree on a consistent approach to the use of e-portfolios to involve children more actively in this process. They should set meaningful targets with children to improve their learning and evidence their progress on a regular basis.

- The headteacher gathers views of children at whole school level in various ways including questionnaires and focus groups. There are limited opportunities for children to take on lead responsibilities across the school. Children in P7 show responsibility as play leaders and lunchtime monitors. The headteacher has identified the need to give all children more opportunities to lead and have a greater voice within the school. Children are well equipped to have a much greater input in developing the work of the school and teachers should support children to identify priorities that they can lead and develop.
- In all classes, teachers use digital technologies to support the learning experiences. In the best examples, this is well planned, aligned to the intended learning and used to enhance the learning and teaching. Teachers should now continue to develop the use of digital technologies across the school to ensure children independently access them to support and challenge further all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers use standardised assessments to help inform and understand the learning needs of children. They make effective use of ongoing assessments of children's progress during the course of learning and teaching. Teachers have made a positive start to developing holistic assessments. This should be developed further and become integral to the planning of learning and teaching. This will support children to apply their learning in new and unfamiliar situations and help to plan next steps which are appropriate to their needs.
- Teachers' confidence in making judgements on children's progress is developing through increased participation in ongoing moderation activities within the school and its cluster group. Teachers would welcome increased opportunities to work collaboratively with staff in other schools. This will allow them to develop a better understanding of standards for children. They use the local authority progression pathways for literacy and numeracy to support progressive and coherent learning experiences for children. They should continue to extend this work to cover all areas of the curriculum.
- The headteacher tracks children's progress through termly reviews with teachers which focus on both children's attainment and wellbeing. Teachers use these discussions together with their own professional judgement to plan learning and interventions. There is a need for all staff to take ownership and responsibility for the assessment information relating to the children across the school. This will help to support teachers to make more informed decisions in relation to the planned learning experiences while monitoring the impact of interventions on children.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers identify and use core curriculum planners for health and wellbeing, social studies and science and technologies to assist them in their planning. Teachers use these with increasing confidence and make links with the National Benchmarks. They also identify core experiences and outcomes that develop through the ethos and life of the school. As planned, staff should review the cross curriculum planners to ensure there are clear links across the levels in relation to contexts for learning. This will support teachers to develop learning opportunities that show progression across the levels.
- Teachers use Aberdeenshire learning pathways in literacy and numeracy to support the appropriate planning of learning experiences for children based on their prior learning. This ensures that teachers can see progression of learning within the levels. The school should now continue with plans to use learning pathways across all areas of the curriculum to ensure appropriate pace and challenge for all children across the curriculum.
- The school is developing a range of opportunities to develop the use of digital technology to support and enhance the curriculum. There is a range of technology available to children and in the best examples, children use this well to enhance learning experiences. Teachers should now research and implement a skills progression in digital literacy to support children to make appropriate use of digital technology. This will support their independent use of the technologies across all areas of the curriculum.
- Overall, there is scope to develop the curriculum across the school. As identified by the headteacher, there is a need to work with all stakeholders to develop a clear curriculum rationale which reflects the context of the school community and the focus of the schools current curriculum developments, including Developing the Young Workforce (DYW). As they continue to develop the curriculum, staff should extend opportunities for outdoor learning across all stages making best use of the local environment and partners who support the school.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are positive about the work of the school. Teachers provide parents with a range of opportunities to develop their understanding of the work of the school. They lead curriculum workshops linked to both mathematics and learning in P1. In addition, staff invite parents to termly assemblies which give children the opportunity to showcase their learning. Parents report that the school has an open door policy and any issues that arise are dealt with quickly.
- Parents engage well with their children's learning through the e-portfolios used by the school. This allows children to share key aspects of their learning as part of the schools approaches to reporting to parents. Feedback is positive from both children and parents and there is a real sense of pride from the children when sharing their achievements. Teachers should now ensure there is consistency for all children across the school in how children select work to showcase their achievements. This should link closely with target setting.
- The headteacher consults parents on a number of areas for development including the school vision and values and expectations relating to home learning. They would benefit from more feedback on the outcomes of this so they can see what impact their opinions have on the work of the school. The headteacher plans to introduce regular feedback on suggestions from parents and demonstrate action the school has taken as a result. Parents would welcome increased communication from the school particularly focusing on ways to support their children's learning. This would allow them to provide more support for their child's learning in the home environment.

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



### 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

- The school has created a friendly and welcoming ethos where children feel safe, happy, nurtured and keen to come to school. Staff know children and their families very well and respond promptly to any concerns about their wellbeing. Almost all children, including those who require additional support, benefit from the small learning environment where staff understand and respond to any concerns or anxieties they may experience. Almost all children feel that they are treated fairly and with respect and the school teaches them to show respect for others.
- The school has made a positive start to ensuring that the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators are understood and implemented by all staff and children in the school. Children are able to talk about how the wellbeing indicators relate to their own circumstances and what actions they can take to ensure their wellbeing. The school is developing children's knowledge and understanding of their wellbeing through its Health and Wellbeing programme and through aspects of the curriculum. Staff could include the wellbeing indicators within its assessment process.
- All children who have individual learning plans (ILPs) are making progress from their prior levels in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The school engages positively with its partners to support children to make progress with their learning and wellbeing and involves parents and children in this process. While the school regularly reviews children's progress towards targets set within their ILPs these are not always set out in parent and child-friendly language and links with the curriculum are not sufficiently clear.
- Pupil support assistants and visiting specialist teachers work very well with children and provide valuable support to ensure children requiring additional support make progress in their learning. At the time of the inspection there were no co-ordinated support plans or child's plans.
- Children, including those requiring additional support, are helped to prepare for their move into the school and onwards to secondary school through the school's enhanced transition arrangements. This is helping children to prepare for a new learning environment through visits to familiarise them with the new school and meet staff.
- The headteacher and staff have a sound understanding of the cultural and rural context of the school and teachers frequently reflect local interests and issues in learning tasks. They use their detailed knowledge of individual children to anticipate any potential challenges they may face. The school actively promotes tolerance and patience throughout the school. Children demonstrate kindness and helping attitudes to other children in class and playground. The school uses its Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) to provide targeted support for children who need help

to address gaps in their learning and support their emotional wellbeing. As a result of the school's inclusive approaches, there have been no exclusions over the past three years and attendance is consistently very high.

- Where appropriate, the school provides opportunities to boost children's resilience, social skills and emotional literacy through group and individual support. The school uses its partnerships within the community to ensure a strong focus on the safety and wellbeing of children and their families. A recent successful event for older children, run in partnership with the school's police liaison officer focused on risky behaviours. It helped to enhance staff, children and parents' understanding of the risks associated with social media use and drug and alcohol abuse.
- Key partners support and deliver a range of learning activities for children both within and out with the school. Children are taught to play musical instruments by a visiting music specialist. They also have opportunities to improve their physical fitness, confidence and teamwork through programmes run by the Rugby Development Officer. Both girls and boys have shown high levels of engagement with the rugby programme.
- The school actively challenges children's thinking around discrimination and has open discussions as part of its health and wellbeing programme. This is helping to develop children's tolerance and respect for other religions and cultures. The school values and celebrates diversity and discrimination in line with the local authority' policy.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

Good

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

- As each cohort in this school is fewer than ten, statements about overall progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children.
- Across the school, almost all children are making good progress in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Staff work well with children who require additional support with their learning to ensure they make progress from prior levels. At all stages of the school, a few children are exceeding national expectations for literacy and English or numeracy and mathematics.

#### Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is good.

#### Listening and talking

- All children are making very good progress in listening and talking at the first and second levels. Across the school, children take turns in class and group discussions and listen respectfully to the teacher and to each other's views. In the best examples, children take responsibility for ensuring that all members of their group have the opportunity to contribute to discussions. Children speak confidently about what they are thinking and learning during conversations and ask searching questions of each other. Children working at the early level can respond well to instructions. They can ask and answer questions about pictures and stories to show their understanding. By the end of the second level, almost all children can build on the contributions of others during cooperative learning tasks and group discussions.

#### Reading

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is good. Children across the school enjoy reading and make personal choices about what they like to read. They show their understanding of various texts read through regular quizzes and assessments which track their progress. This is having a positive impact on their engagement and attainment. Children read across a range of genres. They explain their preferences for particular authors and their reasons why. By the end of the first level, all children can read aloud a familiar piece of text with fluency and expression and use a range of word recognition strategies effectively. They identify the main ideas of a text and ask questions to help make sense of a text. By the end of the second level, most children read with fluency and expression and apply a range of reading skills and strategies to read and understand texts. They make relevant comments about features of language and identify the main ideas with appropriate detail.

## Writing

- Across the school, children benefit from individual core writing targets which help them to understand what they need to do to improve their writing. Most children at the early level write with increasing confidence and control, forming letters and words legibly. By the end of the first level, most children can start sentences in a variety of ways, spell common words correctly and organise ideas in a logical sequence. By the end of the second level, the majority of children write for a range of purposes including informal letters, information reports and fictional stories using complex sentence structures and vocabulary. However, some samples of writing lacked detail and children could be encouraged to develop the content and extend their writing, particularly at the second level. To support improved standards, the headteacher has identified the need for increased scrutiny of writing including regular sampling and cross school moderation.

## Numeracy and Mathematics

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Almost all children are making expected progress. Most are on track to achieve or exceed appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels by the end of the current session.

## Number money and measurement

- At the early stages, all children add and subtract confidently within 10 and identify and order numbers within 20. They use appropriate language when discussing time and describe common objects using appropriate measurement language such as shorter and taller. By the end of first level, all children use known multiplication and division facts to find fractions of a whole number. They use correct mathematical vocabulary when discussing the four operations and use this well to solve two-step problems. Children at this stage would benefit more from continued development of a range of mental strategies to support calculations. This will help them to select the most appropriate strategy for given calculations. By the end of second level, most children explain the link between different digits and their value and use and discuss a range of strategies to support mental calculations. They calculate simple fractions of a quantity and show a developing understanding of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimals and percentages. Children at this stage would benefit from increased exposure to real life problems and opportunities to develop independence in their learning. This will allow them to apply their mathematical skills across a variety of contexts and curriculum areas.

## Shape position and movement

- At the early stages, all children identify and describe symmetrical pictures with one line of symmetry. They recognise the features of a range of common 3D objects. By the end of first level, all children describe and plot accurate two figure grid references and identify lines of symmetry in pictures. They know and use the compass points. By the end of second level, most children measure and draw angles within 2 degrees. They know that the radius of a circle is half of the diameter.

## Information handling

- At the early stages, all children use knowledge of colour, shape, size and other properties to match and sort items in a variety of ways. By the end of first level, all children use a variety of different methods to display data including bar graphs and Venn diagrams. By the end of second level, most children collect, organise and display data accurately and use the language of probability to describe the likelihood of simple events occurring.

## Attainment over time

- Overall, almost all children are making good progress over time in both literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. Teachers use a range of assessments to support their professional judgements. They are developing their understanding of how standardised

assessment information can support them to identify next steps for learners and this is beginning to impact on children's attainment. Engagement in moderation activities across the cluster is developing staff confidence in assessing children's progress.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children participate in a variety of clubs and activities both in school and across the cluster. All children engage in a number of cluster events including a residential experience for P6 and P7 children and various festivals organised by the Active Schools coordinator. They also take part in accredited programmes, such as the John Muir Award. Children support the local community and establish close links with the village hall committee. This allows them opportunities to engage the community in their various enterprise and fundraising concepts.
- Children's achievements within and outwith school are recorded and tracked by the headteacher and staff celebrate wider achievement through assemblies, the achievement wall, achievement books and through the children's e-portfolios. Staff and children reflect on their achievements across the year through the end of year newsletters which allows them to celebrate key successes as a class. Teachers are beginning to support children to make links between their wider learning and skills for learning, life and work.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic background of all children and seek to provide appropriate interventions to address individual needs. They know and understand the needs of children and their families. Children's attendance in school is very good with attendance rates above both the local and national average. The headteacher uses funding from the pupil equity fund to increase staffing. This is enabling interventions to support the development of literacy and emotional wellbeing as well as supporting increased engagement in learning. Interventions are tailored to meet the specific needs of identified children. All children are now more motivated to learn through the increased range of digital technology available to support their learning.

## Choice of QI: 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
  - Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
  - Impact on learners' successes and achievements
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- All staff feel that they have opportunities to be involved in agreeing improvement priorities for the school and most say they are involved in the school's ongoing self-evaluation activities. The headteacher understands clearly the school's strengths and improvement needs. However, due to changes in staffing and the head teacher's class commitment during 2018/2019, it has not been possible for the school to follow through on some aspects of improvement priorities set out in the school improvement plan. These include more active involvement of partners and stakeholders across the learning community in ongoing self-evaluation activities and increasing pupil voice in school matters.
  - The school recently consulted with stakeholders including parents and children for their views on the school's vision and values. These are promoted through displays and reminders across the learning environment, at assemblies and through the school's health and wellbeing programme. The school recognises that it needs to develop effective mechanisms to consult with stakeholders and show more clearly how children's, parents' and partners' views inform change and improvement.
  - Within the school and its community cluster, staff engage regularly in effective quality improvement and moderation activities where they analyse attainment information. As a result they have a clearer understanding of Curriculum for Excellence standards and benchmarks. The school increasingly gathers a range of data and information to monitor and track progress for all learners. Staff interrogate data, making use of digital technology to support this where relevant and appropriate. The school has taken some steps to ensure all planning, monitoring, tracking and evaluating is manageable and relevant for all involved.
  - Staff are making increasing use of a range of local and national advice, case studies and research to reflect on current practice to develop their understanding of priorities such as developing skills for life and work. The school should further develop its approaches to seeking out and sharing good practice within the school and more widely. They should use this to demonstrate improvements in learning, teaching and children's achievements.
  - The school can demonstrate evidence of improvement based on actions taken as a result of self-evaluation. For example, assessment data is more effectively used to inform appropriate support for groups and individuals. As a result, staff can now show that most children are making good progress in their learning in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. In particular, the school can demonstrate improvements in children's reading and reading comprehension as a result of an increased focus on developing reading skills. Children are beginning to reflect on their work through learning journeys and engage in some self and peer assessment in some areas of the curriculum. The school is planning to further develop shared approaches to self-evaluation with children, parents and partners and use it to plan continuous improvement.

## 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.