

# Summarised inspection findings

**Urafirth Primary School**

Shetland Islands Council

10 December 2024

## Key contextual information

Urafirth Primary School is a rural school situated between the villages of Urafirth and Hillswick on Shetland. There are currently 21 children in the school organised between two multi-composite classes and seven children attend the nursery. The headteacher has been post for six years and teaches for part of the week in the school and part of the week in the nursery. She has overall strategic responsibility for the nursery.

There are visiting specialist teachers for music, art and physical education. All children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile six. Of the children registered at the school, 24% have additional support needs. In September 2023, no children in P6-P7 were registered for free school meals.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

**good**

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

- All staff and children at Urafirth primary school offer a very warm welcome to visitors. Children are proud of their school and community and share their learning confidently with visitors. The headteacher, supported very well by the staff team, has high expectations for all children. This is demonstrated in children's respectful interactions with each other and adults. Children exemplify the school values well as they show care and kindness to others and take on responsibilities across the school. All children behave well. All staff have nurturing relationships with children and know children very well. This is resulting in children who feel safe, settled and are keen to learn. The headteacher has begun to support staff and children to learn more about children's rights. As identified, staff should increase their confidence in supporting children across the school to understand their rights and what these mean for them.
- The headteacher and staff are committed to creating an inviting, and engaging environment for learning. They sourced funding to create nurturing spaces indoors and outside. Children have access to a beach, extensive grass areas, outdoor shelters, loose parts, a garden and polytunnel. Staff make effective use of this rich environment, planning learning for sustainability and regularly taking learning outdoors to maximise children's experiences. Teachers engaged in professional learning and research to extend the outdoor learning experiences they provide. Children often learn mathematics or science outside. For example, they plant vegetables, which they tend and harvest for the catering team to use in children's lunches. This helps them to understand clearly about sustainable food produce. Children benefit from these well-planned outdoor learning activities, which help motivate them. As a result, almost all children are highly engaged in learning, particularly when it is outside in their school playground.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning and explain what children need to do to be successful in learning. They provide clear instructions and engaging learning activities. They develop effective routines with children and supply resources to support them to be

independent in learning. For example, children have tasks to complete when finished work, which consolidate and extend learning. This allows the teacher to support everyone well in the multi-composite classes and maximises the learning time available. Teachers use open ended questions and thinking time effectively to allow children to consider answers and deepen learning. Children have opportunities to share what they want to learn and review learning with the teacher at the end of the week. This helps the teacher to include children's ideas when planning interesting and appropriate learning for the next week. Children thrive on this involvement in planning learning. Teachers should extend this further to give children more opportunities to lead their own learning.

- All teachers provide individual feedback to children during learning, for example in writing tasks, which helps them to know how to improve their work. Teachers should now ensure children have more time to act on feedback across the curriculum. This should help children to better remember and refer to their next steps in learning. Teachers recently introduced writing targets and useful checklists which are supporting children very well to increase the quality of their writing. Teachers should now extend the use of targets to other areas of the curriculum.
- The numbers of children at each stage varies each year. Teachers are very mindful of this when planning learning and play experiences to meet the needs of all children. In the P1-4 class there are a range of opportunities for play. These include free play, play linked to class learning and science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) play activities for older children. This allows younger children to engage in appropriate play experiences and ensures older children develop creativity and critical thinking skills. Teachers should now continue to engage with professional learning on play pedagogy as they develop play experiences more widely.
- Staff have engaged in high-quality professional learning to increase their confidence in supporting and extending children's digital learning. They provide children with shared access to laptops and support them to learn skills in digital literacy progressively. This includes how to create presentations and research safely on the internet. Children use micro bits to develop coding skills and teachers linked this to current learning on World War II. A few children use digital devices regularly to support learning, including using immersive reader and speech to text. Teachers evidence clearly the positive impact this is having on improving children's confidence and in supporting their progress in reading and writing.
- The headteacher and teachers developed an assessment policy to provide clarity on when assessments take place. Teachers use formative and summative assessments to plan next steps in learning. These assessments also support teachers in their professional judgement of children's progress within and achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. They have recently introduced the use of high-quality assessments in a few curricular areas. Where high-quality assessments are used effectively by staff, children successfully consolidate learning, transfer their skills, and understand the relevance of their learning. As a next step staff correctly identify the need to broaden opportunities for high-quality assessments across the curriculum.
- Teachers plan learning well to meet the different needs of children in both multi-composite classes. They provide learning at different levels to support and challenge children. Teachers should ensure they extend the pace and challenge of learning further for a few children to help them make the best possible progress. Staff create detailed individual plans for children who require support with learning, to meet their needs effectively. Support staff skilfully amend plans to respond to children's wellbeing as required. They provide active and play based learning to make learning manageable for individual children. This is supporting a few children to sustain learning, feel included and achieve success.

- The headteacher meets teachers regularly to track and monitor the progress of all children across the school. These meetings support staff to review the attainment, wellbeing and progress of individual children. As a result, staff plan appropriate interventions for children not making expected progress. They also plan different learning for children who are working beyond expectations. This is helping most children to make appropriate progress. A few children could be challenged further in learning to attain CfE levels earlier.
- Teachers regularly moderate learning through collaborative planning, joint teaching and formal and informal discussions. They have allocated time on the collegiate calendar to work as a staff team to engage in moderation activities. For example, their recent work on developing reading has led to children's increased motivation to read and improvements in reading progress for identified children. Moderation will be further enhanced in the agreed cluster teaching and learning programme. As identified, staff should have increased opportunities to visit local schools, observe learning and teaching and share good practice.
- The headteacher has committed her small pupil equity fund (PEF) budget to employ additional staffing to support play and STEM based learning. Previously the headteacher used PEF to develop inclusive environments and provide resources to support children's learning and wellbeing. All children are benefiting from the enhanced learning environments and resources, through their increased engagement in learning, as evidenced well in wellbeing surveys. The headteacher includes parents in discussions on the allocation of resources.

## 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

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

Attainment information is provided in overall statements, due to the small numbers of children at each stage.

### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Across the school, most children are attaining expected CfE levels in literacy and numeracy. Children who require support with their learning are making good progress towards their individual targets.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and English. A few children are working beyond expected levels. A few children are capable of making even better progress.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school children are articulate and confident when speaking to adults and each other. They make eye contact and respond appropriately to questions. Most children join in well with group discussions, responding to each other and allowing others to take turns to speak. Older children build on the ideas of peers and are respectful of each other's views. They would benefit from further opportunities to engage in debates, and present to an audience.

### Reading

- All children benefit from teachers' focus on reading and regular opportunities to read texts. They are motivated to read and talk confidently about their current reading books. Younger children enjoy listening to and re-telling stories, sharing why they like a particular book. At first level children know the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts. They explain how the contents page, index and headings help them to find information on a topic. They should continue to develop their skills in answering a range of questions about a text read. At second level, children read fluently with clear expression. They share an accurate summary of a text they have read and predict what might happen next based on their reading. They should continue to recognise the techniques an author uses to engage a reader.
- Staff have used grant funding to refurbish the school library. They created an attractive space which is used by all children to select books. Children benefit from the wide choice of fiction and non-fiction books on offer.

### Writing

- Staff introduced a whole school writing improvement focus which is impacting positively on children's writing skills. Children's understanding of how to improve their work is developing through increased opportunities to write, regular oral feedback and a clearer focus on targets. Children's progress in written work is evident from jotters and displays.

- At first level children are learning to use a wider range of vocabulary to add more description and detail to writing. They write stories, recounts and reports and use checklists to reflect on their writing. They should now be supported to edit their writing after feedback to add more detail and to check for accurate use of punctuation. At second level children enjoy writing linked to their World War II topic, where they use descriptive language to describe well how characters are feeling. They should be encouraged to use increased figurative language to engage the reader. They would benefit from opportunities to improve writing based on feedback given.

### **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are exceeding expected levels across the school. A minority of children find multiplication and division challenging. Teachers should now ensure children have frequent opportunities to revisit the core numeracy skills of multiplication and division throughout the year. This will support children to consolidate and maintain their learning in these areas.

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

- Younger children confidently order numbers forwards and backwards to 20. They add and subtract mentally within 10 and use concrete materials to add beyond 10. They read on the hour times from clock displays and know the sequence of daily routines. By the end of first level children accurately add and subtract three digit numbers using a written method. They round numbers confidently to the nearest 10 and 100 and estimate well the answer to simple calculations. They need further practise with money calculations. At second level children are confident in calculating a fraction of a number and explaining equivalent fractions. They are learning to convert fractions to decimals and percentages. They have a clear understanding of the different ways to pay for goods and discuss how to budget carefully. They need more support to answer accurately two-step problems, where more than one calculation is required.

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

- Across the school children have an appropriate knowledge of a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. Older children explain confidently the properties of different triangles and circles, including radius and diameter. All children undertake learning on position and movement. Younger children develop complex racetracks and use the language of position and movement well to direct their cars. Older children are learning successfully to use bearings, angles and scale to create maps and complex directions to secret locations.

### **Information handling**

- Younger children confidently sort items by colour, size and shape. They can identify the most popular eye colour on a class graph. At first level children collate data to create bar charts which are labelled appropriately. They correctly answer questions about the most and least common eye colour. At second level children take part in an annual beach clean and collate all the rubbish and debris they find. They categorise and weigh the items and create a chart to show the most common items. This helps children to see the relevance of learning and to transfer skills across the curriculum. They create graphs and charts using digital technology and answer questions confidently about their data. They also understand that not all data is accurate or reliable.

### **Attainment over time**

- Due to the small numbers of children at each stage, the headteacher and teachers review the individual attainment of all children as they progress through the school. They meet regularly to monitor attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The headteacher's tracking data shows the good progress almost all children are making as they move through the school. Where a child is not making expected progress, staff agree actions to support them to make better progress. These include interventions, or increased support and this is followed up to



ensure children receive the support they need. Children who are making progress beyond expected levels are also highlighted as part of discussions and additional challenge is planned.

- The headteacher follows local authority guidance on maximising attendance. Attendance is above national levels and is improving. Where attendance drops for a particular child, the headteacher supports families effectively to improve attendance.

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

- Staff celebrate children's achievements in and out of school on a 'Wow' wall display. Children are developing sporting, creative and academic skills as they take part in after school clubs, school activities including concerts, coffee mornings and local clubs. Children raise money for school funds through their own initiatives, helping them to see how they can make a difference to their community. As a next step, teachers should support children to recognise the particular skills they are developing through these experiences. They should provide children with further opportunities to practise and refine these skills.
- Staff enable all children to take part in 'Da Voar Redd up' Shetland's annual clean up. This is helping children to understand the impact of man-made issues on our environment and climate. They are learning how to be responsible citizens and about the impact of actions on their local area.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff understand the challenges families and children may face in a rural island location. For example, this includes the risk of missing out on experiences due to the location of the school community. Families face challenges with transport and additional costs for travel. The headteacher accesses several grants to provide resources for children to help maximise the experiences they offer children and families. The headteacher is well supported in this endeavour by staff and the Parent Council. They provide, for example, all-weather clothing, school uniform and subsidise the costs of any trips. All children benefit from equity of opportunity to attend a range of trips and activities, which is helping them to experience learning they may not have had the opportunity to try.
- PEF is allocated to provide additional staffing one hour a week to support a few children's social and emotional needs. The headteacher measures the impact of supports through surveys and feedback. This data shows that targeted support is helping children to close gaps in learning and wellbeing.



## Other relevant evidence

- All children experience two hours of high-quality physical education each week. They also enjoy regular opportunities for active learning through meaningful outdoor activities.
- Children from P1-P7 learn French as part of 1+ 2 language approach. Staff should ensure children receive their entitlement to a second language as part of this national initiative.

## 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.