

Summarised inspection findings

Clerkhill Primary School

Aberdeenshire Council

4 July 2023

Key contextual information

Clerkhill Primary School and Nursery Class is situated in the town of Peterhead, north of Aberdeen on the East Coast. Peterhead is the largest white fishing port in Europe and many of the town's population are employed in fishing related industries. Clerkhill Nursery and Primary is situated in the west of the town and serves a large area of both private and local authority housing. 37% of children live within Scottish Areas of Multiple Deprivation deciles one to four.

At the time of the inspection, May 2023, the primary school roll is 451, with 226 boys and 225 girls. The post of headteacher is currently held jointly by two members of staff. Clerkhill Nursery is accommodated within the Clerkhill Primary School campus. Children attend from the age of three until starting school. The setting is registered for 27 children with 44 children on the roll. 22 children attend the nursery class each session.

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

- Children identify strongly with the school. Senior leaders and staff provide a welcoming and caring ethos where all children are encouraged to do their best. Relationships across the school are positive between staff and children, and among children and their peers. Most children are keen to learn and behave respectfully towards each other. A rights-based approach supports children's understanding of their rights. Class charters are visible in almost all classes and aspects of children's rights are reinforced in children's learning and wall displays. Supportive and nurturing relationships help to build children's confidence and wellbeing and contribute to a positive learning environment for all children.
- Most children engage well with their learning when the lesson is not overly teacher directed. In most classes, teachers are developing their approaches to planning learning that meets the needs of individuals and groups. As identified, staff need to develop further this understanding to ensure appropriate learning experiences for all children. There is also a need, in most classes, for children to experience increased pace and more challenge in their learning. This will sustain, and develop further, levels of children's engagement. Children respond enthusiastically to activities that require a level of investigation for example STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) related learning.
- In most classes, digital technology is used effectively to enhance and support learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to stimulate learning. Staff effectively employ a variety of digital supports for children who experience barriers to learning. This includes dictation tools and text to speech functions on individual devices. Children are becoming increasingly skilled at carrying out literacy tasks using tablet computers. They confidently use devices and a minority use matrix barcodes to access activities that consolidate learning.

Across the school, children should develop further their use of digital technology in information handling and relate this to real-life contexts.

- The school has a designated library area. Promoting reading is a whole school initiative. Staff should continue to promote the use of the library to support all children's personalised reading for enjoyment. They should develop further its use as a central whole school resource to extend and deepen learning.
- The school provides children with two hours of quality physical education per week in line with national guidance. All children benefit from a variety of different well-planned contexts and curricular areas during outdoor learning experiences. Currently this includes growing plants, expressive arts, problem-solving activities, managing risk and exploring mathematical contexts including grid references, maps, perimeter, and area.
- Overall, children are clear about what they are learning. Teachers offer clear explanations and instructions appropriate to the age and stage of children. Most teachers make effective use of questioning to support and extend learning. As planned, there is room to develop this further across the school to promote higher order thinking and challenge. Where tasks and activities are at the appropriate level, children display greater engagement and participation in their learning.
- In most classes, teachers share with children how they can be successful. The inclusion of links to skills such as teamwork and communication is a developing area of practice. Most children understand how they are progressing in literacy and numeracy. Teachers should continue to develop the co-construction of success criteria as a way of empowering children as more independent learners.
- Staff support children with barriers to learning well through the use of visual prompts, quiet spaces, trusting relationships and appropriate individual learning tasks. Pupil support assistants engage very well and respond effectively to children's wellbeing and learning needs.
- Staff at early and first level are successfully developing play pedagogy with all children. They make effective use of the early years national guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me (2020)', to review, reflect and develop further their practice. Most children maintain their concentration, interact, and engage well with the range of opportunities to learn through play. Children benefit from a carefully planned, enabling environment which is helping them to develop skills such as creativity, problem solving and independence. As planned, teachers should continue to build approaches to play-based learning into first level and beyond. This will increase children's confidence and self-reliance in leading their own learning.
- Teachers are developing shared practices to promoting high-quality learning and teaching. Senior leaders and staff should continue to evaluate, and ensure greater consistency in the delivery of these agreed approaches including in the use of questioning to promote more enquiry based learning.
- Teachers across the school plan assessment opportunities which link well to learning activities. For example, across the early level, teachers use planned observations as assessments. Across the school, children are increasingly involved in self and peer assessment. Overall, teachers provide useful feedback to children on their learning through an approach that promotes children's voice. A majority of children know what they need to do to improve. Teachers should continue to refine approaches to feedback to improve the consistency of these conversations.

- Teachers make good use of a range of assessment information to plan learning and identify those children requiring additional support.
- Teachers are improving their understanding of National Benchmarks through professional learning, moderation activities, and local authority guidance on high-quality assessments. Teachers share approaches to assessment, particularly in literacy and numeracy. They moderate standards within the school at a stage level and, occasionally, across stages. Cluster level moderation has just resumed. Staff are now more confident in the reliability of assessment data now gathered. A range of assessment evidence, and moderation of standards with colleagues, informs teacher professional judgement. This supports staff in evaluating more systematically children's progress. Senior leaders are aware that further work remains to ensure that the National Benchmarks and assessment standards are applied consistently across the school. This will ensure that assessments provide reliable evidence to report the progress of all children and plan targeted support.
- Teachers plan over time to ensure coverage of each curricular area, with flexibility to respond to children's interests and needs. Children report that they are involved in planning learning and have the opportunity to suggest what they want to study. Teachers use well learning journey walls in early level classes to enable children to see their progress.
- Staff have developed an approach to tracking and monitoring at a whole school level. Currently, information about progress in learning relates to numeracy, literacy, and health and wellbeing. Teachers are aware that the other curriculum areas now need to be included.
- Currently staff collate children's involvement in out of class learning. Appropriately, staff now plan to extend this approach to include the skills children are developing. This will help staff identify where there are gaps in children's learning and experiences as well as those children who are at risk of harm or missing out.
- Senior leaders review the progress of individual children with class teachers. Using the data gathered, staff effectively monitor and evaluate the progress made by identified children and groups, and the impact of different interventions. There is scope to streamline the current approaches to tracking and monitoring progress. This will bring a sharper focus to these discussions.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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 in literacy and numeracy

- School data for session 2021 – 2022, indicates that overall attainment in literacy and numeracy was satisfactory. Senior leaders and staff have refined approaches to teaching reading, writing and numeracy. There is evidence of impact confirmed in the attainment for session, 2022 - 2023. At early and first level, overall a majority of children are achieving well in reading, writing, listening and talking, and numeracy. School data now indicates that most children successfully build on their prior learning at first level. At second level, a majority of children achieve well in writing, and numeracy and mathematics, with most achieving well in reading, and listening and talking.

Attainment in literacy and English

Overall, most children make good progress in literacy and English.

Talking and listening

- At early level, most children listen well and respond appropriately to questions. They talk confidently, make predictions, and follow simple instructions. Children at first level respond appropriately to each other verbally and the majority take turns in conversations. They ask and respond to questions to demonstrate their understanding. At the second level, the majority of children are comfortable expressing their opinion in a group. Children would benefit from developing their skills in preparing and delivering talks.

Reading

- Most children working towards early level use their emerging knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. At first level, children enjoy reading. Most can discuss their favourite authors and the majority know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Children at second level are enthusiastic readers. Most are able to discuss their favourite authors, books, and genres.

Writing

- Most children working towards early level can draw pictorial representations of people. Most children are aware of full stops. At first level, children engage in daily writing tasks related to literacy as well as other parts of the curriculum. Most children are developing well their skills in extended writing tasks. Whilst children's writing tasks are leading to extended pieces of texts, teachers need to maintain a balance between scaffolding to support writing and promoting individual creativity. In a minority of cases, spelling and written presentation are both poor. At second level, children focus successfully in part on the technicalities of writing, including working on grammar, parts of speech, vocabulary, and spelling.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, a majority of children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count forwards and backwards to 20 and a few children beyond 30. Children add within 10 although they need further practice at subtraction. At first level, most children solve addition and subtraction problems with 3-digit whole numbers. Children confidently tell the time using half past, quarter past and quarter to using analogue clocks. By second level, most children identify the link between a digit, its place, and its value for whole numbers to a million. They successfully read, write, and order decimal fractions to three decimal places. Children are less confident in understanding the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and name two-dimensional shapes with a few recalling the properties of three-dimensional objects. Most children are developing their use of positional language through the use of loose parts and block play. At first level, most children know the four main compass points and describe, follow, and record routes. A majority of children successfully identify lines of symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Across second level, most children successfully describe the relationship between three dimensional shapes and their nets. They use their knowledge of angles to identify acute, obtuse and reflex angles. A majority of children calculate the perimeter and area of regular two-dimensional shapes accurately.

Information handling

- Children working towards early level can match and sort items based on colour, size, and shape. At first level, a majority of children successfully record information from surveys on a range of topics. They can collate, organise, and display this data on bar graphs. Children use Venn diagrams to sort data groups into sets, interpret findings and answer questions. At second level, a majority of children talk confidently about using line graphs, pie charts and digital technology to create and display information.

Attainment over time

- This session the attainment of children in literacy and numeracy shows improvement. At first and second level, the number of children on track to achieve the minimum expected level is increasing. A majority of children are making good progress A number of children at both first and second level exceeds expectations. Senior leaders and staff are successfully addressing the dip in children's attainment at first level. Information on children's progress and attainment effectively informs planned interventions and support. Most children are making good progress as a result.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Staff make effective use of visual displays of children's work, social media, assemblies, and recognition walls in corridors and classrooms. This successfully promotes a climate of achievement. Children value the opportunities to discuss their interests and achievements.
- Across all stages, a majority of children gain valuable skills for learning, life and work through participating in a wide range of activities. Examples include STEM experiences as well as the opportunity to develop confidence through performance activities.
- Almost all children in P7 develop leadership skills through roles such as head pupils, prefects, technology leaders and house captains. In addition, there are a few children across P3 – P6 who are developing their confidence and leadership responsibility through the junior leadership team. A next step for senior leaders would be to expand the leadership opportunities to more children, including children at early level. Children directly involved in the Rights Respecting

School project increase their confidence by delivering presentations to peers. Across the school children are developing well their understanding of their rights and responsibilities.

- The John Muir Award provides a targeted group of children with a wider learning experience. The children involved benefit from the relaxed outdoor learning environment and are developing skills such as, teamwork, resilience, and perseverance. Children successfully develop confidence and lifeskills through skills-based challenges and activities that are delivered through the newly formed skills HQ area and discovery den.
- Senior leaders are at an early stage of tracking wider achievement both in school and beyond. As planned, senior leaders should develop this further by supporting children to reflect on the skills they are developing as learners through wider achievement experiences.

Equity for all learners

- Equity is a strong feature within the life and work of the school. Children benefit from a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Staff fully understand the school's local context and work well to meet children's needs and address any issues that arise. Staff take steps to minimise potential barriers that might limit children's participation and achievement in school activities. Staff successfully address the cost of the school day. This enables all children to engage fully in what the school can offer.
- Senior leaders and staff monitor closely the progress of identified groups and individual children. The allocation of pupil equity funding (PEF) to additional staffing provides children with increased universal and targeted support. This effectively raises attainment for children facing barriers to their learning. A whole school approach to nurture supports staff in effectively improving children's social skills and readiness to learn. School staff work closely and effectively with partner and specialised agencies. Partnership working with stakeholders is a significant strength and is supporting positive outcomes for identified children. Staff are able to evidence the impact of targeted interventions and support on children's sense of wellbeing, inclusion, and attainment.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.