

Summarised inspection findings

Tarland Primary School and Nursery Class

Aberdeenshire Council

9 June 2020

Key contextual information

Tarland Primary School serves the village of Tarland in Upper Deeside and the surrounding area. There is a joint headship for Tarland and Logie Coldstone Primary Schools. At the time of the inspection, staff and children from Logie Coldstone Primary School were co-located in Tarland Primary School due to significant repairs taking place at their own school. Logie Coldstone Primary School was not included in this inspection.

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

- Tarland School has a warm, welcoming ethos which reflects the school values. The children are polite and respectful to adults and each other. Staff know the children, their families and the community very well. Staff work well together and regularly engage in professional dialogue and informal conversation about children's progress and wellbeing.
- Most children at Tarland School are keen to learn and confident when sharing their ideas and opinions. They respond positively when given choices within their learning. Opportunities to learn through exploration and investigation at early level motivate children and stimulate their curiosity to learn. There is potential to build on this good practice. All staff are starting to develop the children's understanding of rights based learning through the establishment of class charters. As a next step, this should be developed further and used to fully underpin the school's approaches to promoting positive relationships.
- Children in most classes use digital technology for a variety of purposes across the school, such as recording evidence of learning and researching topics. They are confident and motivated when using electronic devices and would welcome increased opportunities to make use of the resources more frequently.
- Learning areas are bright and well organised. There are clearly defined curricular areas and routines are well established. Children are encouraged to be independent and responsible within the classrooms. Wall displays include an appropriate range of children's work from across the curriculum. As a next step, displays could include more information related to previous, current and future learning. Referring to these would help to raise children's awareness of the skills and knowledge they are developing.
- The quality of teaching is good. In most classes, teachers provide clear instructions and explain tasks clearly. They use effective questioning to elicit information, encourage the

sharing of ideas and promote deeper understanding. Teachers plan a range of creative activities designed to engage learners and most incorporate an element of personalisation and choice for learners. Teachers should now use a wider range of differentiation strategies ensure that children are provided with sufficient challenge.

- In the majority of lessons, teachers share intended learning with the children and identify what constitutes success. Staff should ensure that these are well matched to learning activities and that children have more opportunities to be involved in the process of constructing success criteria. Teachers give children oral and written feedback on their progress, but in most lessons this needs to be more specific and skills based. This would help children to understand fully their next steps in learning.
- Planning approaches in literacy and numeracy are inconsistent across the school. Whilst reference is made to resources, knowledge and skills, there is an overall lack of detail in relation to experiences and outcomes, assessment, pace, differentiation and progression. Staff at Tarland School have worked together to group experiences and outcomes together in all curricular areas other than literacy and numeracy. They use these to help plan coverage of knowledge and skills over a three-year cycle and teachers provide an overview of planned activities. Teachers also make efforts to motivate children by taking account of their interests and the local context. However, medium and long term planning in all of these areas lack sufficient detail. Staff should now consider how to ensure that planning takes account of breadth, depth and progression. It is of particular importance that assessment is integral to the planning process and that prior attainment of individuals and groups is taken into account when planning learning activities across the curriculum.
- Teachers evaluate children's progress using a variety of formative and summative assessments. Approaches to assessment vary greatly across the school in terms of planning, method, focus, timing, resources and recording. Staff should now develop and implement a consistent approach to assessment across the curriculum. This will help them to identify progress and next steps at specific times throughout the session. A more robust and aligned approach will provide important collated assessment information about the attainment of individuals, groups, classes and cohorts. It will also support fuller engagement with the National Benchmarks and help to develop a shared understanding of attainment within and across a level. Class teachers and specialist staff need to plan, assess and evaluate the progress of children with specific needs in a more structured and collaborative way.
- Staff have started to engage in moderation activities in aspects of literacy and numeracy within the school and in association with local schools. This is helping to develop a shared understanding of standards.
- The headteacher meets with staff to discuss learners' progress and an electronic tracking system has been introduced. However, more consistent and rigorous assessment and planning procedures are needed to strengthen approaches to tracking and monitoring. This will provide accurate data that can be analysed to identify individual and collective strengths and areas for development as part of the improvement cycle.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

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 attainment in literacy and numeracy

- From projections provided by the school, all children in P1 are on track to achieve at the early level. The majority of children at P4 and P7 are predicted to achieve appropriate levels by the end of the school year. From inspection activity we agree that teacher's professional judgements are not yet robust.
- Teachers have taken part in moderation activities, and there is a current focus on numeracy in the cluster of associated schools. Increased participation in moderation, as planned, will support the accuracy of professional judgements.

Literacy and English

- Progress within literacy and English is satisfactory.

Reading

- Most young children at the early level are confidently identifying, reading and writing individual letters and CVC words. They can discuss these words in context. At first level, children are enjoying their reading and are able to talk about their favourite authors. They have a basic understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction. However, they are less secure about the concept of genre, even when prompted with examples and need to develop their understanding of this. They can read unseen text with some expression and are able to answer comprehension questions from previous understanding or by using contextual clues. At second level, older children are more secure about the difference between fiction and non-fiction and have an improving understanding of genre. They enjoy the opportunity to read books of their own choice in class. Some children are able to discuss their favourite author and their reasons for preferring them. They now need to extend their experience of reading a wider variety of texts.

Writing

- Most young children at the early level are able to use finger spaces, form letters correctly, copy accurately from a whiteboard and produce detailed black line drawings. At first level, children are experiencing a range of writing for different purposes. This has recently included imaginative writing, a Victorian diary and instructions for making a magic potion. Children now need to improve the presentation of their writing. Most older children at the second level are responding positively to a new writing approach. This has led to them writing about holidays,

giving an imaginative response to literature, summarising, writing a letter, scripting conversations and working on aspects of grammar. They now need to experience and practise writing in an increased number of genres. Children are familiar with, and can discuss in context, a number of figures of speech including simile, metaphor and onomatopoeia. They now need to incorporate these figures of speech into their own writing.

Listening and talking

- Young children at the early level are working well together, discussing and planning their learning. They are still developing their turn-taking skills. At first level, children are improving their discussion skills. They are developing their confidence as they gain experience of performing in front of others and recording explanatory text for historical items. They need more practice in participating in group conversations about a topic. Older children at second level enjoy discussion, sometimes becoming very excited about the topic. They are keen to talk about their learning, their preferences and to justify their points of view. However, they need to practice turn-taking and listening more carefully to others during discussions. Children at second level need more opportunities to lead learning experiences in classes.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Progress in Numeracy and Mathematics is satisfactory.

Number, money & measurement

- At early level, all children count accurately within 10 using one to one correspondence. They would benefit from more regular opportunities to practise correct number formation. They are unable to add within 5 with confidence or accuracy. Almost all understand the concept of long and short but need support to compare and describe weight. Almost all children at first level round to the nearest 10 and write numbers to 1000. They understand the vocabulary associated with the four numerical operations and use multiplication facts to solve problems. They count forwards and backwards from a given number in 2s, 5s and 10s. They solve two part problems and calculate change from £5. The majority of children need to improve their understanding of place value and of simple and equivalent fractions. They also require support to estimate length and calculate the area of a regular shape. Almost all children at second level write and round numbers to the nearest 10,000. They understand negative numbers and their use in real life contexts. The majority need support to express fractions as a percentage and to convert fractions to their simplest form. The majority of learners need to develop more fully their understanding of digits and their place value. The majority also need to improve their ability to accurately multiply whole numbers by two digit numbers. Most children need support to calculate the perimeter and area of a simple two-dimensional shape.

Shape, position and movement

- All children at early level can name and draw simple two-dimensional shapes and describe their properties using appropriate language. They can identify basic three-dimensional objects. Almost all children at first level know the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They identify lines of symmetry and right angles in regular shape and know compass points North, South, East and West. At second level, almost all children know a range of types of triangle and explain the properties of common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects.

Information handling

- Children at early level contribute to pictorial charts and graphs connected to their work in other curricular areas. They classify objects and group them accordingly. Almost all children at first level answer questions about bar charts, tables and graphs and are aware of the range of ways that data can be presented. At second level, almost all children can identify a variety of ways of collecting and presenting data.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has been tracking data over time. Data is gathered on reading, writing, talking and listening, numeracy and health and wellbeing, over several years. SNSA data is considered, and used diagnostically, but not included in tracking and monitoring. There is scope to ensure that, as planned, staff are more involved in data entry and analysis and that data is used as effectively as possible.
- The school provided data from sessions 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 and projections for attainment in 2019/20. The school has had limited success in raising attainment over time, according to its own data, although it still sits above local authority and national averages in most attainment measures. From inspection activity we agree that teacher's professional judgements are not yet robust.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children's achievements both at home and in school are recognised and celebrated through good news assemblies, wall displays and social media. Currently, staff select children's successes for display on the 'Achievement Wall'. Children would benefit from taking greater ownership of this.
- The children are proud of their participation, having represented their school in a variety of local sporting and cultural events. There are a range of community and school based after-school clubs on offer, including a science club and a variety of sports clubs. Older children contribute to the life of the school, taking responsibility as 'Buddies' and 'Helping Hands'.
- There are four pupil groups to which children are elected by their peers; pupil council, eco group, rights respecting schools (RRS) and junior road safety officers (JRSOs). These groups meet monthly with the headteacher and offer leadership opportunities for children. In addition, the school offers all children the opportunity to participate in a variety of activity groups which are run weekly by teachers. These currently include board games, sewing, art, construction and sports and enable children to develop skills in these areas. Teachers now need to help children to make links between their involvement in these groups and the skills that they are developing. The children should have an understanding of what action is taken as a result of their suggestions for change in the school. Opportunities for pupil voice should continue to be provided so that children can be empowered to progress their skills in leadership and teamwork and to influence decision making.
- A system is being developed to record children's participation in 'wider achievement' in line with authority practice. The school's engagement with this is at a very early stage. The

headteacher agrees that she and the staff now need to monitor and track children's achievements together, ensuring any gaps are identified.

- 'Learning Logs' have recently been developed to provide parents/carers with a regular insight into their child's curricular activities across a week. All written activities and other materials used in the target week are placed in the log and sent home. Children and parents are invited to comment on this and return it to the teacher. Learning Logs would have greater impact if they were to be sent home regularly over the school year, incorporating opportunities for children to reflect upon their achievements and skills developed.

Equity for all learners

- The school has used Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to purchase resources, fund educational trips, engage speakers and fund additional staffing to support interventions in school. There has been limited success in closing the attainment gap so far and the school should ensure that this funding is appropriately targeted.
- Staff know children and their needs well. A significant minority of children have been identified as having additional support needs. Staffing has been put in place to support children with additional support needs, both within and outwith the classroom, individually and in small groups. The school should ensure that all children with identified needs who require one have an individualised plan.

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.