

Summarised inspection findings

Hopeman Primary School

Moray Council

1 October 2024

Key contextual information

Hopeman Primary School is a rural non-denominational school with a roll of 142 pupils. It provides education to children from P1 to P 7 in six multi-stage classes. The catchment area includes the neighbouring villages of Cummington and Duffus and there are a number of placing requests each year from outwith the catchment area. The school sits within the heart of the village. The acting headteacher has been in post for 10 months and was previously principal teacher. She has been a member of staff for 17 years. The headteacher is supported by an acting principal teacher. There have been a number of staff changes over the past year. Almost all children live within deciles 8-10 in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation.

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 benefit from nurturing relationships with staff across the school, who encourage and support them. Children have recently contributed to the development of class charters, underpinned by children's rights and the school values. Teachers are making more consistent use of positive behaviour strategies. These are effectively linked to the charters and school values and support children to self-regulate and manage their emotions when facing challenges. This is helping all children to understand their role in creating a positive learning environment. As a result, almost all children are engaged and interact well during learning. Relationships and behaviour within the learning areas are positive. There are very few incidents of disruptive behaviour.
- In most classes, teachers use digital technology well to enhance the quality of learning experiences and increase children's motivation to learn. Digital accessibility tools are used effectively to support children who have barriers to learning. As a result, children who require additional support are able to access the curriculum and independently complete activities.
- Teachers are implementing effectively development work in learning and teaching, led by the acting headteacher. This is leading to considerable improvement in the quality and consistency of learning experiences for children. For example, in almost all lessons teachers use 'flash back' to recap prior learning. In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of the learning using visual supports and discuss what successful learning will look like. In a few classes, success for children is focused on completion of a task rather than the demonstration of knowledge or skills being developed.

- Most teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding of learning. A few teachers use questioning well to promote curiosity and develop children's higher order thinking skills. They provide children with regular feedback. Teachers have undertaken professional learning to continue to build capacity and support improvement in feedback. They are focusing on writing to provide children with greater detail about what they have done well and what steps they need to take next to improve further.
- Teachers plan tasks and activities that are well matched to the needs of most children, following professional learning in ensuring that children with different needs and abilities have equal access to learning. A few children would benefit from greater challenge in their learning. Children have opportunities for personalisation and choice in areas such as social studies, maths and literacy. This is leading to increased engagement and independence in their learning.
- Staff make very effective use of the school grounds and local community to enhance learning experiences for children. Children enjoy highly relevant learning outdoors in the P1 garden, farm garden, local harbour and beach. These opportunities maximise the wide range of learning contexts in the local community, as well as supporting children's wellbeing and safety. Teachers plan learning using the outdoor learning curriculum map and local context planner. This consistent whole-school approach supports children to apply their learning in real-life contexts and motivates children to engage in the outdoors.
- Children at P1 experience opportunities for learning through a balance of free play and teacher-directed play. Teachers plan experiences which are relevant to children at P1 and their stages of development and interests. As planned, teachers should continue to develop further play across the school.
- Teachers have recently begun to use a wider range of assessment approaches in literacy and numeracy, including summative, formative and standardised assessments. Staff are implementing a helpful assessment calendar that is strengthening the breadth and quality of information. This provides baseline data and demonstrates children's progress and attainment over time. Teachers are continuing to develop the use of assessment information to inform planning and identify effective next steps for children. This is resulting in increasingly reliable data. Children receiving targeted interventions are assessed regularly to monitor individual progress in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Teachers should now include planning for high-quality assessments that give children the opportunity to apply their learning in unfamiliar contexts.
- All teachers engage in moderation of assessments involving colleagues from the Associated Schools Group (ASG). This is further supporting the development of a shared understanding of standards and expectations within the national Benchmarks across all the schools. At second level, staff engagement in ASG moderation is beginning to enhance progression and increased depth of learning for children in numeracy and mathematics as they transition to secondary school.

- Teachers plan appropriately over different timescales. Teachers have started to plan collaboratively across levels. Teachers plan from Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes, supported by progression frameworks aligned to the national Benchmarks for curricular areas. Children at all stages are experiencing increased progression and coherence in their learning and experiencing breadth of learning across the curriculum. Support for learning staff plan appropriate next steps well for children who require additional support with their learning. As a result, children who require additional support are becoming more confident and are experiencing greater enjoyment in learning.
- The acting headteacher has introduced revised approaches to tracking children's progress using a range of assessments and the national Benchmarks. Tracking meetings support teachers to use data to consider barriers to learning, appropriate interventions and measures of success. As a result, teachers plan more effectively to meet the needs of all learners. As planned, the acting headteacher should continue to develop systems to track cohorts of children over time. This will support the timely and targeted use of interventions to improve outcomes for all learners.

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

- Almost all children at P1 and most children at P4 and P7 are attaining expected CfE levels in reading and writing. Almost all children at P1 and most at P4 and P7 are attaining expected CfE levels in numeracy. A few children are capable of achieving more. HM Inspectors are not confident in the accuracy of current attainment levels in listening and talking, which are too high. Most children are attaining expected levels in listening and talking.
- Almost all children who receive additional support for their learning make good progress against their individual and group targets for learning in literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children express their views confidently. Almost all children are attentive and listen carefully to instructions in groups and whole class settings. At early level, most children recount experiences accurately. They are developing skills in taking turns when listening and talking in groups. At early level, children would benefit from further opportunities to develop their listening and talking skills through play and teacher-led activities. Across the school, children are not yet sufficiently aware of the listening and talking skills they are developing. As a result, outwith the classroom environment, a majority of children at first and second level find it difficult to take turns, listen respectfully and build on the contributions of others.

Reading

- Children across the school enjoy reading and make use of the attractive school library, as well as class libraries. Staff model how much they value reading through their own professional learning library, which is well stocked and displayed prominently. This supports children in their appreciation of reading. At early level, most children use their knowledge of blending sounds to decode familiar and unfamiliar words. They use pictorial clues to retell familiar stories and predict what will happen next. A few children describe a character from a story. Children at first level recognise the difference between fact and opinion. They are not confident in explaining why they like a particular author. Children at second level recognise techniques that are used to influence the reader. They do not discuss with confidence the writer's style and use of language.
- New reading approaches across the school are having a positive impact on the development of reading skills. Although at an early stage of development, children are selecting and using strategies such as decoding and context clues to help make the meaning of texts clear.

Writing

- At early level, most children write a simple sentence using a capital letter and full stop. A few children add an adjective to their writing. Children at early level would benefit from opportunities to practise letter formation more often. Children at first level use strategies well to spell familiar and unfamiliar words. Children at second level make notes and redraft work to create applications for leadership roles. They need more opportunities to write across a range of genre at greater length. Teachers have adopted a whole school approach to support children in handwriting and presentation. Children are benefitting from this increased focus on presentation and handwriting and the quality of written work is improving, especially at early and first level.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, children recognise numbers from 0 - 20. A few children require support to count backwards from 20 and to identify the number before. Most children add and subtract mentally within 0 – 10. At first level, most children demonstrate an understanding of place value. They round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. Children are less confident when calculating change within £10. At second level, most children convert time from 12-hour to 24-hour notation. They round decimal fractions to the nearest whole number and demonstrate equivalent forms of simple fractions. Children are not yet secure in working with percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and sort two-dimensional (2D) shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. At first level, the majority of children calculate the perimeter of a simple 2D shape. Children know that a right angle is 90 degrees and identify right angles in the environment. At second level, most children identify an acute, obtuse and reflex angle. They use a protractor to draw an angle. Children are less secure in calculating the area of a simple 3D object.

Information handling

- At early level, most children use tally marks and record information on a pictorial graph. At first level, most children gather information from a survey to create a bar graph. At second level, children interpret information and draw conclusions from line graphs and pie charts by asking and answering questions. At first and second level, children would benefit from opportunities to use digital technology to collect, organise and display data.

Attainment over time

- The acting headteacher has considerably strengthened approaches to monitoring children's progress. This detailed information shows that most children across the school are making good progress over time.
- Children who require additional support are making strong progress this year. This improvement is based on very effective personalised plans which track how well interventions are working and where adjustments in planning are necessary.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children access a wide range of high quality and thoughtfully planned achievements which support them to experience success and develop skills across all aspects of the school curriculum. All learners are encouraged to add their personal achievements to an online platform.

- Outdoor learning is a vital part of the curriculum. Teachers plan for achievement using the local area, providing children with rich opportunities to develop confidence and appreciation of their local environment. Children are developing important knowledge about how to keep themselves safe in an agricultural and seaside environment. Their increased confidence builds their resilience and supports them to try new and challenging activities. This adds to children's self-belief in what they can achieve.
- Staff use 'Star Improver' certificates well to record, track and celebrate children's achievements. They recognise children's achievements and record them under the banners of confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors. All children receive certificates, bands, and badges. Teachers track and analyse this information and provide more targeted support where needed. 'Super Improvers' are celebrated for achievements across a range of activities. Children experience success and develop new skills as they move through the levels.
- Children have increasing opportunities to gain leadership skills through roles such as house captains and in 'Leaders of Change' groups. All children at P7 are buddies to children starting school. This helps those at P1 settle into school and supports children at P7 to be responsible. Children contribute effectively to the learning of others through activities like paired reading.
- Achievements gained outside school, such as success in music and sports, are celebrated at school assembly. Teachers know their children well. They signpost opportunities to parents of any children who would benefit from accessing additional clubs or activities. As planned, staff should continue to work with families and partners to develop ways to capture, celebrate and build on skills. This needs to include those gained at home and in the community as well as within school.

Equity for all learners

- Attendance levels have dropped since COVID-19, but remain around 92%, which is higher than the local authority average. The acting headteacher monitors attendance closely. Parents have been informed by newsletter and social media that attendance is a strong focus for improvement. There are a few children whose attendance is well below average and the acting headteacher is following the local authority processes in conjunction with partners. There are also a number of termtime absences which are related to children being taken out of school for family holidays.
- The school has limited Pupil Equity Funding. Pupil Equity Fund termly progress meetings take place between class teachers and SfL staff. These allow staff to plan and evaluate targeted interventions for children at risk of not achieving. As a result, children are making a greater rate of progress. The ASG works together to focus Strategic Equity Funding on supporting those who may be affected by wider poverty markers. This approach supports home-school link support and improving attendance, as well as signposting wider family supports across the ASG.
- The Parent Council and the local authority support all children to take part in a range of adventurous activities including abseiling, coastering and bush craft. They promote equity and strengthen relationships within the school community by providing financial support.
- The Ministry of Defence provides funding to meet the needs of children whose parents are in service. This includes a pupil support assistant who visits children weekly and provides tailored support. Children say that they welcome this very much, as it increases their sense of belonging and emotional wellbeing.

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.