

Summarised inspection findings

Bridgend Primary School

The Highland Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Bridgend Primary School is situated in the town of Alness in the Highlands. Approximately one third of children attend as a result of placing requests from outside the catchment area. At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 278 children working across 10 classes. The majority of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles 1 to 6.

The headteacher has been in post since November 2020. She is supported by a deputy headteacher and a principal teacher, both of whom are class committed for periods throughout the week. Over the past 18 months, the school has experienced periods of disruption caused by building work and changes in staffing.

Bridgend nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

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

- Staff have worked well together to create a learning environment which is underpinned by the school's vision, values and aims. Almost all children demonstrate positive relationships with staff and their peers. The majority of children engage well in tasks and activities set by teachers. Staff's use of restorative approaches is impacting positively on children's behaviour. These approaches are helping to reduce the number of occasions where children display dysregulated behaviour. Most children participate well in the wider life of the school. A majority of children believe the school listens to their views.
- Children across the school are developing an understanding of their rights. All children have worked collaboratively to create classroom charters linked to children's rights. Staff should now refer to these charters regularly to help children make connections between their learning, daily interactions and their rights.
- In a majority of classes, teachers make effective use of wall displays to support children's learning. For example, wall displays in P1 support children well with the spelling of 'tricky' words. In a few classes, teachers use 'learning journey' wall displays to support children to reflect on prior learning and set targets for their learning profiles. Children would now benefit from including their learning targets in their online digital profiles. This would allow them to discuss and revisit targets with their parents.
- In most lessons, teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. Teachers share the purpose of learning and check that children understand what they are expected to do. In a few

classes, staff consult children about how they will demonstrate their success in learning. In the majority of classes, children use teacher-set success criteria to self- and peer- assess.

- In a few classes, children are able to choose some aspects of learning. In a few classes, teachers use higher order thinking skills to prompt children to think deeply about their learning. Teachers should now provide more opportunities for children to exercise personalisation and choice. This will help children to take a more active role in leading their learning. Children would benefit from increased activities that link learning to real-life contexts and skills for life and work.
- Overall, the pace of learning is too slow. In a majority of lessons, teachers direct whole class lessons and spend too long explaining tasks. This leads to a few children disengaging from learning, talking and distracting others. In a few classes, learning is matched well to children's needs. Teachers should now ensure that learning is better matched to meet the needs of all children and provides the right level of challenge.
- Overall, teacher feedback is not yet of a sufficiently high-quality. In a few examples, teachers provide feedback in jotters to highlight to children what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Senior leaders should continue to support teachers to develop a consistent approach to providing verbal and written feedback. In taking this forward, teachers should plan time to allow children to respond to feedback. This will help children to better understand the progress they are making.
- Teachers are at the early stages of introducing play-based approaches in P1. Younger children are beginning to have access to opportunities for planned play to help them practise, develop and apply their skills. Staff should continue to engage with national practice guidance to develop their understanding of the benefits of play-based learning and the role of the adult in play. This will help to enrich children's learning experiences and raise attainment across the early level.
- Most teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to support learning. They use a digital platform to capture and share children's learning experiences with parents. A few teachers use digital technology well to enrich children's learning. Teachers should build on opportunities across all stages to extend children's digital literacy skills.
- Teachers make use of a range of summative assessments in literacy and numeracy. This includes commercially produced standardised assessments and end of topic tests. The headteacher discusses the results of these assessments with teachers when reviewing plans for learning. This supports teachers to identify children who require additional support with their learning and to plan targeted supports. There are early signs that this targeted support is impacting positively on outcomes for identified children.
- In a few classes, teachers use formative assessment strategies well to check children's understanding during lessons. Teachers should develop further their approaches to ongoing assessment to help them respond better to the needs of all children. This will help ensure all children experience the right level of support and challenge in their learning. In taking this forward, staff should plan opportunities for children to demonstrate breadth, depth and application of learning.
- Teachers' plans for learning are guided by whole school long-term overviews. The overviews aim to ensure children experience coverage of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. However, at times, this approach is limiting opportunities for children to consolidate and revisit their learning. Staff should review and refresh their approaches to planning learning

to be more responsive to the needs of all children. This will help to raise attainment and improve outcomes for children.

- Teachers engage well in moderation activities with colleagues across their associated schools group. This has supported teachers well to develop their understanding of national expectations in writing. As planned, teachers should build on this positive approach by extending moderation activities to other curricular areas. This will support further their understanding of national standards across the curriculum.
- The headteacher has supported staff to improve approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in learning. Teachers engage well in termly discussions about children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use information from tracking meetings to plan targeted support for children who are not on track with their learning. The headteacher should now support staff to use the information gathered to inform next steps for all learners. This will help all children make the best possible progress in their learning.

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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children's attainment is satisfactory. Across the school, a majority of children are on track to achieve expected national standards in literacy and numeracy. A few children are capable of achieving more in their learning. Most children with additional support needs are making satisfactory progress towards individual learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in reading and listening and talking. A recent focus on writing has supported an improvement in children's writing. As a result, a majority of children at all levels are making good progress in writing.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, the majority of children are confident and articulate when expressing their views. At early level, most children listen well to instructions and are beginning to listen to each other. At first level, the majority of children listen and respond appropriately to each other. At second level, the majority of children are beginning to recognise and use nonverbal features of good listening and talking. Across the school, children would benefit from a more structured approach to improve listening and talking skills.

Reading

- At early level, the majority of children enjoy being read to by staff. The majority of children know single sounds but are not yet confident blending sounds. At first level, the majority of children are becoming fluent readers and answer questions accurately about a text. At second level, the majority of children identify the main idea in a text. At second level, children would benefit from more practice asking and answering literal, evaluative and inferential questions.

Writing

- Most children at early level write a sentence using capital letters and full stops. At first level, the majority of children identify the features of writing in different genres, such as recounts. Children are not yet secure in spelling common words or in using spelling rules to attempt to write unfamiliar words. At second level, the majority of children write across a variety of genres and for different purposes.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are making good progress. A few children could be making better progress. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to revisit taught concepts to deepen and consolidate their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children count forward and back, and add within 10. They would benefit from more practice with subtraction. At first level, the majority of children identify the value of a digit and round numbers to the nearest 100. They are less confident comparing the size of fractions. At second level, the majority of children add and subtract three- and four-digit numbers using a variety of strategies. Children at second level are less confident in their recall of multiplication tables. They would benefit from consolidating knowledge of area and perimeter and the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, the majority of children recognise common two-dimensional shapes. At first level, the majority of children recognise three-dimensional (3D) objects and describe some of their properties. Children at first level require more practice with symmetry and identification of right angles. At second level, children should revisit the properties of 3D objects and consolidate their knowledge of angles. Across the school, more needs to be done to develop children's knowledge and understanding of measure.

Information handling

- At early level, the majority of children use a simple graph to answer questions. They match and sort items in different ways. At first and second level, the majority of children extract key information from a variety of data sets such as bar charts. Overall, children should develop their skills in collecting, presenting and interpreting data in a variety of ways, including using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher has established processes to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. She has taken initial steps to help staff improve approaches to gathering evidence of children's progress and attainment. As a result, teachers' judgements are becoming increasingly accurate, particularly in writing. The headteacher should build on this positive start to ensure data reflects more accurately children's progress as they move through the school. This will support senior leaders to identify trends and attainment gaps for cohorts of learners.
- The headteacher monitors attendance regularly. She follows local authority attendance procedures. Across the school, a minority of children's attendance is less than 90%. The headteacher should continue to support children and families to improve attendance levels, ensuring appropriate plans are in place and regularly reviewed to support children's learning and wellbeing.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children's achievements are celebrated at assemblies, in newsletters, in social media and on school wall displays. Children attend a range of clubs led by school staff, parents and partners, such as the drama club and football. A minority of children have leadership roles, for example as pupil council members and house captains. Older children have roles of responsibility, for example, as 'Bridgend Helpers' supporting younger children in the playground. Children in P6 learn first aid and P7 children are junior sports leaders, leading clubs and other activities for younger children. All of these activities support children well to develop a range of skills such as leadership and teamwork.
- Senior leaders track children's participation in groups and clubs to ensure children who are at risk of missing out can be supported to take part in activities. Staff should now support children to make a link between their achievements and development of skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good understanding of the social, economic and other factors that impact on the lives of children and their families. They have taken positive steps to minimise the cost of the school day and signpost families to relevant community resources for support. A pupil-led group is raising awareness of the impact of the cost of living. They are building on the work of the Parent Council to organise a 'preloved uniform swap shop'.
- Senior leaders use Pupil Equity Funding to provide additional staffing to support targeted interventions. This is beginning to have a positive impact on raising attainment in some aspects of literacy for identified children. Staff now need to monitor the impact of interventions more regularly on outcomes for children. This will help ensure they can demonstrate they are accelerating progress towards closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Other relevant evidence

- All children learn French. Younger children are beginning to learn Scots and older children Gaelic.
- Local ministers support delivery of religious and moral education through the assembly programme. This is helping children to develop their understanding and appreciation of religious and cultural beliefs.
- Children have access to a range of books in class libraries. Children would now benefit from more opportunities to explore a wider range of texts using digital technology as well as books, leaflets and guides. This would help support development of a stronger culture of reading for enjoyment.

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.