

# Summarised inspection findings

**Kellands School**

Aberdeenshire Council

27 June 2023

## Key contextual information

Kellands School is a non-denominational primary school in Inverurie, Aberdeenshire. The current school roll is 419 children with 20 different nationalities being represented. Fourteen percent of children from P5 to P7 are registered for free school meals. Seventy eight percent of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles six to ten and the remaining 22% in SIMD decile four. Senior leaders feel that the SIMD profile does not fully represent the wide range of socio-economic factors that impact on the lives of children and their families.

There have been changes within the leadership team in recent years. The headteacher has been in post eight years. Within the last two years, two deputy headteachers have been appointed. Additional funding through the Pupil Equity Fund has been used to enhance the senior leadership team further with the addition of two acting principal teachers. There are 16 classes, an early learning centre and two specialist units.

Kellands School 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.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

very good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- All staff put emotional and social wellbeing at the heart of their work and have successfully created a strong sense of community at Kellands School. Staff describe their community as the 'Kellands Family', proudly sharing their deep commitment to providing all children with the best experiences possible. Senior leaders have gained the trust and respect of children, parents, staff, partners and the local community. As a result, children learn and thrive in a happy, calm environment.
- In recent years, senior leaders and staff updated the school's vision and values following consultation with all stakeholders. As a result of this involvement, children, staff and parents have a clear understanding of the vision and values underpinning the life and work of the school. The school's motto, 'where everybody is somebody', embodies Kellands School's inclusive approach and is highly visible around the building. Children created helpful characters to demonstrate their agreed values. These values align with the wellbeing indicators, with an additional value, 'kindness' being added. Senior leaders, children and staff model the agreed values very effectively on a day-to-day basis. Recently, children worked alongside a local animation team to create an informative video about their school, called 'The good ship Kellands'. This animation describes the school's vision and values and their unique context, using the children's creative ideas and opinions. This approach illustrates the staff's commitment to prioritising the involvement of children in key activities.

- The headteacher is very ably supported by two deputy headteachers and two acting principal teachers. They have clear roles and remits which they carry out effectively. Senior leaders are approachable, supportive and very visible across the school. Collectively, they provide highly effective leadership and clear strategic direction with a central focus on the wellbeing of all staff and children. They have successfully created a proactive culture where evaluation and improvement are key priorities for all staff. The highly committed staff team very effectively support senior leaders and school improvement. Their energy, enthusiasm, passion and dedication are improving outcomes for learners.
- All improvement activity is complemented by high-quality professional learning. Senior leaders ensure that robust self-evaluation discussions provide a clear rationale for the proposed changes identified in the school improvement plan. All stakeholders in school, including partners feel included as part of the school improvement journey. Senior leaders manage the pace of change very effectively and ensure that sufficient time is allocated to allow all improvements to become embedded fully in practice. For example, school improvement work around wellbeing in recent years has had a significant impact on improving outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders have created a helpful quality assurance calendar. This includes regular formal and informal class visits and discussions with children and parents about learning. Senior leaders encourage close, collegiate working between staff and engage regularly both formally and informally in effective professional dialogue with them. As a result, staff are confident in leading aspects of school improvement and their own professional development. Senior leaders should now consider how they can include clearer and more robust baselines and measures to capture more effectively the impact of school improvement work. In addition, senior leaders should include ways that parents and children can be involved more meaningfully in evaluating the work of the school.
- Staff feel trusted, valued and cared for due to the supportive and nurturing relationships they experience. The school's 'give it a go' philosophy supports staff autonomy and encourages them to be curious, creative and reflective. As a result, staff are inspired and highly motivated to lead aspects of school life. The quality of leadership across the staff team is a major strength with staff leading areas such as moderation, play pedagogy and nurture. Teachers are very keen to learn from others and regularly undertake learning walks and seek out other professional learning to refine and improve their practice. This is leading to improved outcomes for children.
- Children support the life and work of the school through a variety of leadership roles such as House and Vice Captains, the Eco and Sustainability Group and the Sports Committee. For example, the Kellands Kindness Committee lead the school food bank, clothes bank and toy swap. House Captains have been working in partnership with Aberdeenshire's Strategy Development Officer to create a whole school travel plan to keep their community safe. Senior pupils act as buddies and lead a variety of clubs for younger children. Children are proud that these roles enable them to influence outcomes for their peers. Staff should now consider how they can capture the skills and learning offered by all such experiences. Senior leaders plan to create further opportunities for children in P1 to P4 to develop leadership skills.
- Partners are active participants in school self-evaluation and planning for improvement. For example, Aberdeen Football Club have created a bespoke mindset programme aligned to the Kellands school values.

## 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 in Kellands School have worked together effectively to develop a positive and nurturing culture where respectful relationships provide encouragement for all. This is an important strength of the school. The supportive and caring ethos of the school has led to all children engaging well with their learning, displaying high levels of motivation. Children show resilience, confidence and responsibility as they develop as successful learners, effective contributors, confident individuals and responsible citizens.
- Staff are very committed to a continual process of improving learners' experiences. As a result, in most lessons the learning is enjoyable for children and is well matched to their needs and interests. In most classes, children have opportunities to make choices about how they learn and how they demonstrate learning. Children respond very well when given these choices. Staff create valuable opportunities for children to develop technology skills. For example, children in the younger classes learn to use tools and construction materials, and in the older classes, children have the opportunity to build kit cars.
- Staff are beginning to provide opportunities for children to develop skills for leading their own learning. Teachers should now consider how this could be further developed across the school. At the early stages, teachers make effective use of play-based learning approaches. This encourages children's independence and creativity. Teachers of younger children plan very effectively to ensure that spaces, interactions and resources support learning in line with the national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'. All early years staff support these high-quality experiences through skilful interventions and questioning. Staff should now, as planned, continue to explore how play-based approaches can be used across the school. This should include evaluating the time allocation and impact of the soft start approach taken across the school. Staff should capture children's learning during this time and help children to understand their next steps.
- Children understand the importance of contributing to the life of the school and the wider community. For example, P6 pupils, supported by a community volunteer, have been involved in a gardening project with local NHS staff. Staff should continue to consider how similar opportunities could be developed, implemented and evaluated across all stages. This will help children to develop skills for learning, life and work.
- Approaches to teaching in Kellands School are very clearly underpinned by the school's vision and values. Teachers work very well together to explore creative approaches to classroom activities supported by the school's new learning, teaching and assessment policy. Teachers feel empowered to support each other as they develop new and creative approaches, for example in the use of digital technology to support learning.

- In most classes teachers share the purpose of the lesson and in the majority of classes they identify how children can be successful. In all classes explanations and instructions are very clear. In a minority of classes teachers use very effective questioning to help children develop higher order thinking skills. Teaching staff should now explore how best to extend this strong practice across all classrooms. As planned, senior leaders should ensure consistency and quality in teaching approaches across all classes. The new learning and teaching policy will support this work.
- All teachers know the children in their classes very well and have a strong understanding of the barriers children face in their learning. Staff should now consider how to work on ensuring that learning experiences offer appropriate relevance, pace and challenge to meet fully all learners' needs. Teachers provide children with feedback in various ways and should continue to work together to share strong practice in helping children understand the next steps needed to move their learning forward.
- The majority of teachers use formative assessment to support teaching and learning. They use a range of strategies to monitor children's progress and in most classes children build on their prior learning. Teachers use a variety of assessments to identify gaps or misconceptions in learning. Children understand how they are progressing in their learning when outcomes of assessments are used as part of learning conversations. Senior leaders should ensure a consistent approach across the school is adopted to ensure all data gathered is used to inform next steps in learning. School staff have created an assessment calendar which is helping to build consistency in approaches to assessment across the school. Senior leaders and teachers should now review this calendar to incorporate a wider range of high-quality assessments across key areas of the curriculum.
- Teaching staff take part enthusiastically, both formally and informally, in aspects of moderation activity to develop shared expectations of standards. Staff should now, as planned, carry out further analysis of current practice in the effective use of assessment within the learning, teaching and assessment cycle. This should include opportunities to work together with staff from other schools in the cluster. This will help to reinforce further teachers' confidence in their judgements about achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level.
- Teachers plan over different timescales using the CfE experiences and outcomes. They make effective use of progressive learning pathways in all curricular areas. Teachers must now ensure that they use the national benchmarks to identify assessment activity at the planning stage. Teachers should also explore how learners can be more involved in the planning of learning, building on examples of strong practice that already exist within the school.
- Senior leaders and teachers have developed effective processes to track and discuss children's attainment. They meet formally together three times a year to review progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers should now track children's progress across all areas of the curriculum. They should also now consider how best to use assessment information and tracking data to identify progress in learning. This will allow them to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions identified for individuals, groups and cohorts of learners.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- School Staff have developed the 'Kellands Curriculum Guide' which provides flexible learning pathways across all curriculum areas, taking account of CfE experiences and outcomes and design principles. Staff should ensure all pathways are fully aligned to the National Benchmarks to support raised attainment, appropriate progression, and meet the needs and aspirations of all learners.
- Children's interests, the local environment and global contexts are considered when teachers plan learners' experiences. A focus on play, enquiry, risk taking, and creativity support the school's aspiration for children to be lifelong, successful learners.
- Commendably, teachers' focus on wellbeing and nurture equips children to access quality learning in relevant contexts. This is building opportunities for skills progression, personalisation, and choice. The curriculum has a strong focus on developing the skills young people will need in the world of work. Staff should continue to develop interdisciplinary learning to include responsive planning, taking account of pupil voice and creative thinking.
- All staff take responsibility for developing literacy, numeracy, digital learning and health and wellbeing in a progressive way across the curriculum. Teachers with specialist skills support children to have high-quality learning experiences in music, art and design and science. Teachers collaborate and share best practice, which results in increasingly high-quality learning experiences.
- The school should ensure all classes receive two hours of high-quality physical education weekly. Teachers make good use of indoor and outdoor spaces, supported by a variety of partnerships. This builds on the wide range of planned experiences to promote sport, physical activity, and the wellbeing of children. The school's Sports Committee is working towards achieving the gold sportsscotland School Award.
- Staff enhance the curriculum and give children increased opportunities to learn outdoors through residential opportunities and the John Muir Award. Children in P6 have worked on a gardening project with Donbank Hospital, which is at the early stages of raising attainment and engagement through learning outdoors. The school should continue to develop a well-planned outdoor learning programme for all learners. This will ensure progression across all stages.
- Children across all stages learn French, with older children being introduced to Spanish. Staff ensure that children's modern language experiences are progressive and align with the Scottish Government's 1+2 language learning policy.
- Children receive their entitlement to religious education each week and teachers follow guidelines for religious observance.



## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Partnerships with parents and carers are based on trust and respect, resulting in increasing parental engagement. As a result, parents feel part of the 'Kellands Family'. Parents welcome the re-introduction of opportunities to engage actively with the life of the school. School staff should continue to work towards involving parents in a broader range of activities linked to school improvement priorities and planning.
- Parents trust the staff team and almost all feel that staff are approachable and responsive to any concerns. Almost all parents feel that staff know their children well as individuals, which contributes to the happy, safe, caring, and nurturing ethos. Parents of children who require additional support for their learning feel involved and engaged in planning and evaluating their children's progress.
- Parents value the regular, high-quality communications about their child's experiences and progress. Senior leaders and staff use social media very effectively to share and celebrate successes and achievements.
- The Parent Council supports the school with fund-raising. The school community works to reduce the cost of the school day. For example, parents and pupil committees lead work to support families with a food bank and uniform swap.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

- 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 for urgency.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The strong nurturing approach underpinned by the school's vision and values is a major strength. All staff and partners are committed to supporting children's emotional wellbeing to help them to engage fully in their learning. This approach is leading to improved outcomes in attendance, minimising time out of class for children who need support to engage in learning and fewer exclusions. Children have a very strong sense of belonging because of this nurturing approach. Almost all parents and carers believe the school supports their child's emotional wellbeing.
- Positive relationships are consciously promoted and central to all school activity. Each child is individually understood and their needs are met through the detailed knowledge staff have about their circumstances. Children feel staff know them well and most feel their views are considered. The school should take steps to develop even further opportunities for children to influence school decision-making, in particular for younger children. This should include making it very clear to children how their views have influenced improvement work.
- School staff have developed a bespoke, progressive health and wellbeing curriculum. To do this, they looked outwards to find examples of strong practice and then, commendably, made these relevant to the local context. Adults and children in Kellands School have a shared understanding of the eight wellbeing indicators, with each represented by a character (such as 'Responsible Rabbit', and 'Respectful Raccoon'). Most children feel safe and almost all parents and carers feel their child is safe in school. Most children feel they are respected by staff.
- Children and staff have created an additional character, 'Kindness Koala', and this concept underpins all interactions in the school. The 'Kellands Kindness Committee' allows children to explore how kindness could become an even stronger driver in the school's development. This work on health and wellbeing means staff and children have a strong understanding of the Scottish Government's 'Getting it right for every child' approach. The school is at an early stage of developing children's formal understanding of the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this work should continue as planned.
- Staff, collaborating with a range of partners, have worked very effectively to help children understand and control their own emotions. This has helped children to develop self-awareness about their own reaction to setbacks and has had positive outcomes. For example, attendance has improved for children who previously found it difficult to come into school. Similarly, children who found it difficult to re-engage with class work after the pandemic now spend more time on task in class. As a result, they now access the full curriculum, which is leading to improvements in their attainment. Children have a common language to discuss their emotions confidently with staff. A further benefit of this work is that

children now understand each other's emotions, which has contributed to the school's calm atmosphere.

- School staff regularly survey children to find out how they are feeling about each of the wellbeing indicators. Teachers make very good use of the survey results to identify children who need support with their wellbeing and intervene as appropriate. Almost all children state they have someone they can speak to if they are worried or upset about something and school staff are very alert to their emotional needs. Senior leaders give a very high priority to nurturing staff wellbeing. All staff and partners are well supported by the school and feel they are valued, key members of the 'Kellands Family'.
- School staff have strong knowledge of statutory requirements, codes of practice and professional duties. For example, care experienced children are very well supported to ensure their needs are met. Their progress is carefully tracked and staff, working with external partners, help them to overcome challenges they face. Staff are very responsive to the needs of children who are young carers and help them very well to overcome barriers created by this role. Staff have drawn up appropriate individualised education programmes with well-designed targets for children who require specific support with their learning.
- Staff and children have a strong shared understanding of diversity. For example, staff have taken part in training about the nine protected characteristics and neurodiversity and have helped children to understand these concepts. As a result, children are very proud of the way that difference is celebrated across the school community. They work effectively together to ensure that nobody in the school community faces discrimination. For example, staff and children promote understanding of Makaton across the school. This commitment typifies the 'Kellands Family's' determination to challenge discrimination.
- The whole school community is very committed to ensuring that inclusive approaches to equality improve outcomes for all children. Children are supported to do their best and teachers carefully consider the impact of interventions for children facing challenges, adjusting practice where necessary to make sure interventions have the maximum impact. Teachers are empowered to make in-the-moment decisions about how best to support children who are facing challenging circumstances that impact on their learning. For example, staff engage with children whose emotions are unsteady in calming outdoors activities. Similarly, senior leaders use 'walk and talks' to support children in exploring their feelings.
- Senior leaders and school staff have made very good use of space within the school. They have created well-used nurture spaces where children can spend short periods of time out of class if they need to regulate their emotions. These spaces are well supported by specialist staff who skilfully engage with children, helping them to return to class. This creative use of resources has led to fewer pupils spending significant amounts of time out of class.
- A minority of children feel the school does not deal well with bullying. The school has an anti-bullying policy and staff should now work with children and families to review approaches to recognising and resolving bullying incidents.
- Staff monitor children's attendance carefully and have put in place effective strategies to minimise children's absence from school. As a result, attendance is improving in the school overall and fewer children have extended absences.
- Staff have effective strategies in place to improve outcomes for children who require additional support with their learning. Teachers analyse the impact of interventions supporting these learners and make adjustments as necessary. Because of this, children who require additional support are making appropriate progress.

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to compliance with the Nutritional Regulations and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007(the Act). Health and Nutrition Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and children. Inspectors also examined a sample of documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the catering provider.

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**

- Most children in P1, P4 and P7 achieve appropriate CfE levels in literacy and English and in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment. A few children would benefit from further challenge in their learning.

### **Attainment in literacy and English**

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is good. Most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment.

### **Listening and talking**

- Across the school, most children follow instructions well, take turns and show respect for others' views. At early level, children enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and can share their likes and dislikes. Most children at first level show understanding of the main ideas of spoken texts by responding to and asking questions. They would benefit from more experience discussing the differences between fact and opinion. Most children at second level contribute well to class discussions, building on the opinions and ideas of others. Children at second level would increase their confidence in speaking to a range of audiences if given more regular opportunities to plan and deliver presentations.

### **Reading**

- The school library and class libraries provide access to a wide range of reading materials, including fiction and non-fiction books. Across the school, children have regular opportunities for personal reading. Children enjoy participating in events such as World Book Day. This supports a culture of reading for pleasure and is improving reading outcomes.
- Children working within early level talk confidently about events, characters and ideas relevant to a range of texts. They use their knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. At first level, a majority of children read familiar texts with fluency and expression, make predictions, summarise and answer a range of questions about texts. At second level, a majority of children apply a range of skills such as predicting and summarising and can respond to a range of literal, inferential and evaluative questions. They would benefit from more experience identifying which sources of information are most reliable.

### **Writing**

- At early level, children draw increasingly detailed pictures to illustrate their stories and ideas. Most children demonstrate their early writing skills during play experiences. At first level, a majority of children link sentences together using common conjunctions and use features of grammar to add interest to settings and characters. Children working within first level would benefit from more opportunities to write across a range of genres and for different purposes. At second level, a majority of children demonstrate a good understanding of the features of

different genres. A majority would benefit from more opportunities for personalisation and choice in their writing.

### **Attainment in numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics from prior levels of attainment.

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

- At early level, most children can order numbers to 10 and are developing their confidence in adding and subtracting to 10. They use appropriate measurement language, such as tallest and shortest, when comparing common objects. They would benefit from more practice in identifying coins. At first level, most children can write numbers up to four digits. A majority of children can estimate the distance between two objects in metres. They now need to develop further their skills related to money and time. At second level, most children can add and subtract negative numbers. A majority can simplify fractions and use fractions to perform division. Children at second level should now be given opportunities to apply their learning in real-life contexts.

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

- Most children at early level can use positional language and identify a line of symmetry. Most children at first level can identify simple two-dimensional shapes. They can identify a point on a simple grid. At second level, most children can calculate the angles in a triangle. A majority of children can calculate the area and perimeter of simple two-dimensional shapes. Across all levels children would benefit from increased challenge within shape, position and movement.

### **Information handling**

- At early level, children use counting skills to answer questions on bar charts. At first level, most children can find the probability of rolling a number on a die. Most can extract information from a table. At second level, most children can confidently calculate the probability of events using fractions, percentages and decimals.

### **Attainment over time**

- School data shows a stable pattern of attainment over time. Senior leaders report that attainment was not significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to the robust efforts of senior leaders and staff to support continuity in learning.

### **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Children's achievements within and outwith school are celebrated effectively in a variety of ways including the use of 'Positive Postcards', learning profiles and social media.
- Children have opportunities to attend a wide variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including football, basketball, netball and music. A few senior children enthusiastically lead their own clubs at lunchtime. Children talk positively about experiencing success through participating in and leading clubs. As a result, children's leadership skills are being enhanced.
- Children have a wide range of opportunities to contribute effectively to the life and work of the school, such as the Eco and Sustainability Group, Kellands Kindness Committee and Sports Committee. Senior pupils enjoy participating in the John Muir Award. These roles and opportunities for achievement support the development of a range of skills and attributes such as teamwork, leadership and communication skills. Staff should now ensure these skills are identified, profiled and tracked to support children's understanding of their skills progression.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the social, cultural, and economic context of the school community and the barriers to learning children may face. They use this knowledge effectively to ensure that all children have equity of opportunity and achievement. Senior leaders and staff take sensitive and effective action to mitigate against barriers, including through food and clothing banks and provision of support in a range of specific contexts. As a result, children and families benefit from a range of practical and emotional support.
- Senior leaders' rationale for Pupil Equity Fund spending is based on analysis of a range of data to identify the needs of individual and groups of children. As a result, support is targeted effectively through nurture, wellbeing provision and intervention groups. Interventions and approaches adopted are resulting in improved attendance, increased participation and engagement and an increase in children's readiness to learn. These interventions are accelerating progress for identified children. Senior leaders should continue to track the effectiveness of all funded interventions. This will help them to identify more robustly the impact on individuals, groups and cohorts of children.



## Quality of provision of Special Unit

### Context

The language unit is a joint venture with speech and language colleagues from the National Health Service (NHS). This supports eight children from across the local authority who require additional support to develop their speech and language skills. Children enrol at the school and attend the unit on a full-time basis for approximately 18 months.

The learning unit, funded by the local authority, supports four children with dyslexia. All children attend the unit two days per week. Those children from schools other than Kellands School remain on the roll of their home school. They complete the rest of their education alongside their peers in their mainstream class, either at Kellands or their home school. Staff at the learning unit support 13 children across Aberdeenshire in an outreach capacity.

### Leadership of change

- Both the language and learning units are fully integrated in the life and work of the school. They share the school's vision, values and aims. Senior leaders provide clear, strong leadership. This empowers staff to take forward important priorities identified through the school's self-evaluation processes. Staff have consistently high shared expectations. This supports children to be clear as to how much they are cared for and to make good progress in their learning. Staff have a strong understanding of the challenges each child faces. They take good account of relevant policy and practice. This ensures they turn the school's vision into practice resulting in improved outcomes for children. Senior leaders should continue to support staff in the units to undertake their leadership roles effectively.
- Staff in both the language and learning units embrace leadership opportunities. Senior leaders support them well to undertake these roles. Teachers in both units lead professional learning across the school, cluster and wider local authority in approaches to dyslexia and speech and language difficulties. This supports other staff well to develop their understanding of how to meet children's needs better. This ensures children from each unit settle quickly into class when they return to their home school. Professional learning provided by the team supports staff across the local authority to develop further their practice in supporting all children to access their learning.
- Staff in each unit understand the transient nature of the roll of each unit very well. They reflect regularly on their practice and plan effectively for the changes required to ensure each child receives appropriate and timely support. This ensures each child adapts well to any changes in their placement. Senior leaders need to support staff to continue to review and improve the impact of their practice.

### Learning, teaching and assessment

- Relationships in both the language and learning units are very caring and supportive. Staff's high expectations ensure all children experience an environment which is enjoyable and appropriately challenging. Children interact well when working individually, in pairs or in groups. Planned learning takes good account of children's individual needs and interests. This ensures they engage fully and make good progress. Children understand well what they are learning and why they are learning it.
- The school's vision, values and aims underpin teaching in both the language and learning units very well. Staff embrace the school's values and this supports children to learn in an



environment where they are treated with high levels of kindness and respect. Teachers use a range of approaches to engage children very effectively. Digital approaches are used particularly well as visual stimuli to promote children's interest. Children use tablets to access online programmes independently, often with minimum support. Teachers should continue to develop their use of digital technologies to support children in a variety of ways. Staff explain the purpose of children's learning well which supports their understanding. Staff's feedback supports children well to build their confidence in developing their skills. In both the language and learning units planned learning focusses on overcoming individual children's challenges. This supports children well to develop a range of strategies and skills to support them.

- In the language unit staff use colour-coded covisual aids to support children's understanding of language very effectively. These help children to develop their understanding of words and their meaning. As a result, children can quickly structure sentences to convey meaning.
- Effective multi-agency planning assesses each child's learning needs prior to attending either the language or learning units. This ensures children transition well into their placement at the school. Ongoing regular assessments ensure each child's learning offers appropriate levels of challenge. Assessment data is valid and reliable, ensuring planned learning builds effectively on children's prior learning.
- In the language unit teaching staff and speech and language colleagues from the NHS develop consistent approaches to supporting children to develop their speech and language skills. This very effective joint planning helps children to quickly grasp new concepts and improve their speech and language skills. Teachers, along with speech and language therapists, use a wide range of approaches to track and monitor individual children's progress. Teachers analyse effectively an extensive range of data gathered from tracking and monitoring. This supports them to plan learning, which best meets children's needs.
- In the learning unit, teachers liaise regularly with children's mainstream teachers. This supports them to minimise any potential disruption caused by children's shared placement. Teachers ensure all relevant data regarding children's progress is shared. This supports mainstream teachers to have all the relevant information necessary for them to make assessments of, and report on, children's achievement of a level. Teachers need to continue to ensure children on shared placements make good progress in their learning.

## **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**

- Staff in both the language and learning unit have a very well developed understanding of children's wellbeing. They treat every child with the highest levels of respect and dignity. It is evident in every class activity that every child feels safe and included in lessons. Teachers from other schools and partners speak highly of the quality of collaborative working with staff from the units. They feel valued and supported very well. Relationships between staff and children are very positive and built on a climate of mutual respect. In the language unit, it is evident children feel a strong sense of community in their class.
- Planning to meet children's needs is extensive and takes very good account of national guidance. Teachers have a well-developed understanding of the Getting It Right For Every Child agenda and their role in ensuring children's rights. Staff in both units embrace opportunities to undertake professional learning. They reflect on their learning and make adaptations to their practice to improve children's outcomes.
- Children from both units are included fully in the life of the school. They experience learning alongside their mainstream peers either at Kellands School or their home school. Teachers ensure children experience a curriculum which provides learning across the eight curricular

areas, similar to their peers. Senior leaders should continue to monitor the curriculum in the units to ensure children's experiences are equitable with their peers.

### **Raising attainment and achievement**

- Overall children in both units are making very good progress towards their individualised targets.
- In the language unit, teachers' effective use of assessments supports them to have a very good understanding of each child's individual progress across all curricular areas. In the learning unit, teachers' effective use of assessment supports them to have a very good understanding of children's progress against specific literacy skills. These include spelling, phonic skills and sentence reading. This helps teachers to plan learning, which builds on children's successes. Teachers should continue to support children to make improved progress in their learning.
- Children's individual progress in both units is tracked effectively over time. This ensures children improve their literacy or speech and language skills throughout their time at each unit. All children make sufficient progress and are able to resume full-time mainstream education within approximately 18 months.

## 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.