

Summarised inspection findings

Lumsden School

Aberdeenshire Council

12 December 2023

Key contextual information

Lumsden Primary School is a non-denominational school which serves the village of Lumsden and the surrounding area. At time of inspection there were 16 children on the school roll across P1 to P7 taught as one multi-stage class. The school building has three large classrooms, a lunch room and a gym hall. There is a well-resourced playground and an established garden area. All children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 6 to 8 and a few are registered for free school meals. A minority of children receive additional support for their learning.

1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Lumsden Primary is a welcoming and inclusive school. This session children, staff and parents are sharing their thoughts on the school's vision and values as part of a planned, regular review. This is ensuring the agreed values of happy, cooperating, nurtured and respected have a high profile in school life and remain relevant. The headteacher and staff hold discussions regularly with children at assemblies and during class lessons to gather their views. Most children have a good understanding of the school values and can talk about how these relate to their lives. They recognise positive qualities when displayed by their peers. All children and adults demonstrate the values in their daily interactions with each other. This helps to maintain the school's nurturing and encouraging ethos.
- The headteacher is very well respected by children, staff, parents and the school's partners. She provides effective leadership, underpinned by her encouraging and positive approach and vision for close community working. She is assisted well by a class teacher, support staff and partners. Together, they have successfully developed and maintained a collaborative and supportive culture, while leading the school through a significant journey of change.
- Staff have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of development for the school. The headteacher has established effective quality assurance arrangements, including regular evaluation activities. She samples children's work, carries out lesson observations and holds regular focus group discussions with children. Working together, the headteacher and class teacher created a teaching and learning framework. They use this well to reflect on and evaluate their practice. This is helping to embed consistent, high-quality approaches in the classroom. They seek feedback regularly and take into consideration the views and ideas from children, parents and partners. The headteacher and class teacher provide comprehensive reflection on the success of improvement work and interventions. This is shared through the improvement plan and standards and quality reporting. They use a range of evidence well to help prioritise the most appropriate areas for development. The headteacher should now summarise this evidence more concisely and select key messages to share. This will help to highlight the successful outcomes for children being achieved.

- The headteacher outlines the school's approach to raising attainment and improving children's wellbeing within the school improvement plan. She manages appropriately the pace of change. This session, staff have considered and agreed clearer measures of success for planned priorities, such as outdoor learning. This is helping to track progress and measure the impact of improvements with increased rigour. The headteacher regularly involves all children in evaluating the work of the school and planning positive change through the use of 'How Good is OUR school?'. Staff should continue to consider ways to meaningfully engage parents and partners in planning and evaluating school improvement.
- The headteacher and class teacher have appropriate plans in place to raise attainment and accelerate children's progress in key areas of learning. For example, last session they introduced a new model for teaching writing. This has supported children to write higher quality text across a range of genres. Children are now more confident talking about their ideas and evaluating their own writing. As a result, all children's progress in writing has improved. This session, teaching approaches to support listening and talking with younger children is showing early signs of positive impact.
- The headteacher and all staff have a very good understanding of the school's social, economic, and cultural context. Teachers use this information well to target improvements and inform the curriculum. The headteacher has a well-considered plan for the school's Pupil Equity Fund (PEF). She seeks views from staff and the Parent Council and provides updates on this spending. The headteacher should now explore appropriate ways to inform parents on the impact of the PEF.
- The headteacher supports and encourages staff and children to take on leadership roles. Teachers undertake practitioner enquiry projects which are resulting in improved outcomes for children. All staff feel supported and encouraged to take forward new developments as a team. For example, a staff focus on developing nurturing approaches has had a positive impact on wellbeing for all children. Children take on lead roles, such as school garden activities. They talk enthusiastically about acting on their ideas to affect positive change for their school and learning. Staff should continue to support children to take the lead in their learning and contribute further to decision-making.
- Staff speak positively about opportunities to further their professional learning on topics, such as nurture and assessment. Support staff value opportunities to develop their practice in delivering targeted interventions to support individuals. The headteacher fosters links with other local schools to give staff useful opportunities to learn and share practice with colleagues.

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

- The headteacher and staff create an inclusive, supportive school culture. As a result, children understand mistakes are part of learning and feel encouraged to give their best effort. They help one another and are proud of their school and community. Staff create and maintain a calm and purposeful learning environment. There are positive relationships between all staff and children. Almost all children are attentive throughout learning times and cooperate very well in pairs and groups. All children show a positive attitude to learning and engage well in experiences across the curriculum.
- During lessons, teachers give clear instructions and children understand the purpose of their learning. Staff have embedded helpful classroom and school routines. They share expectations and high standards with children that support a positive school ethos. Across the curriculum, teachers provide differentiated tasks and activities that help children to engage with learning at the right level. Teachers use groupings well to provide learning experiences that meet the needs of almost all children. Staff ensure universal supports, such as counting materials, are always available to help any child with their learning. Teachers use effective questioning to check for understanding, recall prior learning and promote curiosity. This supports children to engage well in learning. Staff should develop their approaches to questioning to promote children's higher order thinking skills and to extend the level of challenge for a few individuals. In writing lessons, teachers share effectively how to be successful with children. This is supporting children to reflect on how well they are doing with their learning. Staff should build on this practice across other curricular areas and support children to take the lead in identifying measures of success.
- Staff have developed classroom environments that promote enjoyment and interest in books. Children regularly access and read a range of fiction and non-fiction books from library spaces. Children are enthusiastic readers and enjoy hearing and retelling stories with adults.
- Support staff make good use of their skills and experiences to support children with their wellbeing, both in class and outdoors. They provide interventions which help children to grow in confidence with key literacy and numeracy skills. This is supporting children to build on their prior learning.
- This session, staff are developing play pedagogy to support younger children's learning. They create stimulating spaces that support independent, play-based experiences and encourage children's creativity. Children have opportunities for choice and enjoy trying a range of interesting activities. As planned, teachers should continue to develop further their understanding and approaches to play, taking account of national guidance. This will help staff to support children to build progressively on their skills and experiences through Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) early and first levels.

- Teachers make effective use of digital tools and resources to consolidate and support children's learning, for example, interactive whiteboards and videos. All children use tablets, laptops and digital games with confidence. A few children make regular use of accessibility tools, such as 'talk to text' features, to aid their writing. This supports independence and motivation. As planned, staff should continue to support children to apply their growing digital skills across the curriculum and to creative activities.
- The headteacher has developed a helpful plan for assessment. Teachers use a range of assessment approaches well, including Scottish National Standardised Assessments, to measure children's progress and achievement. They also use this information for diagnostic purposes to plan targeted next steps for individual children. This approach supports teachers' dialogue on expected standards, resulting in confident, professional judgements on children's achievement of CfE levels. As planned, staff should explore more robust assessment to monitor children's progress in talking and listening.
- Teachers use oral and written comments to provide regular, positive encouragement for children and give helpful feedback on their progress. This is most effective in writing, where they give specific feedback which highlights children's strengths and provides a clear next step. Children are given opportunities regularly to self-assess their work. They are becoming confident in reflecting on their progress in literacy and numeracy, and setting quality learning targets.
- Teachers plan effectively across almost all curricular areas. They make good use of a three-year planning overview, created by the headteacher, to provide breadth, depth and coverage of the curriculum for children. This approach ensures staff build on children's prior skills and knowledge as they move through each stage of primary education. Teachers should explore and develop ways to plan more effectively for expressive arts.
- Staff closely track and monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing through useful termly discussions. The headteacher recognises that more rigorous, regular evaluations of learning in other areas of the curriculum will enhance further children's progress.
- As the school has a small roll, the headteacher ensures opportunities for teachers to engage in moderation activities with colleagues in other schools. Teachers find this helpful in developing a shared understanding of national standards. Most recently, teachers have been moderating their planning and assessment of writing as a cluster group. School staff found this experience valuable in supporting improvement work in this area.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use progressive pathways to plan experiences for children for literacy and numeracy and most other curricular areas. The headteacher, working closely with children, staff and families, created and developed a curriculum rationale. As a group, they considered carefully what their curriculum offers and captured the partnership between the school and its community.
- Children engage in a wide range of experiences and they apply their knowledge across different contexts of learning. The headteacher created a helpful overview linking the children's experiences to curricular areas and themes, such as sustainability. Staff encourage children to take ownership of aspects of their learning and make choices on what and how they learn. Children confidently discuss the skills and qualities they practise when they lead their community café events. As planned, staff should help children to identify and discuss the skills they are developing across the curriculum.
- Staff work very effectively in partnership with a local community arts charity to enhance the expressive arts curriculum for children. Recent shared activities have included intergenerational events and working with artists-in-residence to explore materials, such as clay and bio-plastics. Children also receive music tuition, such as chanter and using digital applications, giving them regular, quality music making opportunities. This rich partnership approach is building children's cultural awareness and developing their appreciation for the arts. As planned, staff should develop progressive skills pathways for the expressive arts.
- Teachers have well-planned arrangements to support children as they move into P1 and from P7 to S1. A minority of children have joined the school at other stages. Parents of these children appreciate the support their children received and felt this helped them to settle well. The headteacher ensures regular partnership with other local schools. This supports children to spend time in larger groups and make friends. Planned joint experiences include a residential excursion, sports events, science activities and a 'day of dance'. This approach helps children feel more confident before their move to Alford Academy.
- Teachers make effective regular use of the outdoor environment as a meaningful context for learning. They provide engaging opportunities for children to learn outdoors in the playground, school garden and local area. Children develop knowledge and transferable skills when visiting and learning in places, such as the Clova Estate woodland and Kildrummy Castle. As planned, staff should develop further children's outdoor learning skills using a progressive approach.
- All children receive their full entitlement to two hours high-quality physical education each week. They receive a termly block of swimming tuition annually. Teachers make good use of both indoor and outdoor spaces to deliver a progressive programme for children. They employ a range of equipment well to meet the needs of all children.
- Teachers provide planned lessons and experiences for Spanish, Doric and Scots across all stages which help children to build on prior learning. Children enjoy exploring the languages and they confidently present to an audience in Doric. These experiences support their growing awareness of culture and heritage.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The headteacher and staff value parents as key partners in the life of the school. All parents feel that staff communicate with them very well. For example, through regular reporting and 'sharing weeks'.
- Parents welcome the range of ways to engage with their child in school. This includes events such as the community cafe, performances and shared family events. The headteacher offers regular ways for parents to share their views, including on the curriculum. She uses a range of approaches to suit families, such as discussions, questionnaires and feedback slips. Parents appreciate the headteacher's open approach. They feel their views are valued and that their suggestions are taken on board.
- The Parent Council work in close partnership with the headteacher and staff to plan experiences which benefit the children and raise funds. They communicate well and inform parents about their work. Children are receiving additional playground equipment and resources for outdoor learning as a result of successful fundraising events. As planned, the Parent Council and staff should continue to work together to enhance the experiences of children whilst considering the cost of the school day.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

- Staff establish and sustain caring and nurturing relationships with children. All adults working in the school are committed to supporting children's wellbeing. Staff run a 'soft start' club before school several days a week. This ensures children feel welcome and supports wellbeing through fun activities. Children demonstrate awareness of their own and others' wellbeing and show compassion. Appropriate to their age and stage, they have an awareness of wellbeing indicators and discuss how these relate to their lives in assemblies and class lessons. For example, most children confidently identify food choices and ways to rest and relax that support healthy living. Staff should support children to build further their understanding of wellbeing indicators and the related skills they are developing.
- The headteacher has established a simple evaluation tool that children use to self-assess their wellbeing at regular points. Staff use this information to identify and plan the most appropriate support and experiences for children. Professional learning on nurturing approaches undertaken by staff has had a positive impact on children and the school ethos. Children know a few strategies they can use to cope with strong emotions and support others who are experiencing difficulty. This has helped to reduce peer disagreements. Staff should continue to help children develop skills and strategies which support their emotional wellbeing.
- Children are developing a good understanding of children's rights. They talk about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in simple terms and identify a number of the rights, such as the right to relax and play. Older children talk about why it is important for children to have rights. The school community is helping to embed a children's rights-based approach and are working towards national accreditation. As planned, staff should continue to make relevant links to the UNCRC across learning, at assemblies and when working with partners. This will help to support children's growing knowledge and understanding.
- Staff and children have worked well to achieve positive outcomes for responsibility and respect. Children show responsible and respectful behaviours throughout their school day. This is particularly evident during lunchtime where all children are responsible and sociable, demonstrating good manners. As a result, the dining experience for everyone is pleasant and supportive. Most children show initiative in taking care of their school and playground. A school 'walking bus' project runs a few times a week to support children and families to travel sustainably and responsibly to school. All children feel they are respected by adults and most show respect at all times to peers. Older children thoughtfully discuss peace and kindness and relate these to events going on across the world today.
- The headteacher works very well with partners and partner agencies to enhance wellbeing and the health and wellbeing curriculum. Children developed new skills and knowledge as they participated in the community 'Scarecrow Road Safety Festival'. They applied learning from their physical education lessons during a joint sports day with cluster schools. Staff work well

with psychological services partners to embed nurturing approaches. Teachers also completed a useful practitioner enquiry on positive mindset research that successfully supported children to become more resilient and persevere during challenges. When multi-agency planning partnership is required, the headteacher works effectively with other agencies to support children and families.

- Almost all children have a good understanding of the importance of feeling safe. Teachers provide well-considered activities to support children to apply their knowledge and skills, for example, risk assessing school grounds. As a result, children can identify and discuss ways to keep themselves safe. Staff have well-established approaches which support children to share and deal with worries or concerns. All children feel safe in school and understand they have adults they can talk to. As planned, teachers should support children to understand more fully online and digital safety.
- The headteacher and staff meet their statutory duties for wellbeing, equality and inclusion well, including meeting additional support needs of children. All staff contribute to the safeguarding of children and are confident with their responsibilities in relation to child protection.
- The headteacher has effective procedures in place to identify children who require additional support. She works well in partnership with staff and families to support children's needs and reduce potential barriers to learning. She ensures children's next steps are clear and tailored supports are put in place which help their progress. As planned, the headteacher should explore ways for children and families to input into planning and evaluate the impact of support.
- The headteacher monitors regularly children's attendance at school to identify any patterns. She has processes in place to support any families experiencing challenges with timekeeping and attendance. As a result, school attendance figures are positive and currently in line with the national average.
- Children mark and celebrate a variety of occasions with the school community, such as Christmas and other faith events. This helps children to develop an understanding of people's cultures and beliefs. Staff and children explore and promote equality and diversity through assemblies and lessons. The headteacher and staff discuss and learn about international campaigns with children, such as the Pride Festival and Black History Month. This is raising children's awareness of diversity and equality. Older children can discuss discrimination and prejudice that they see in the world. Staff should continue to develop and support children's learning of equality and inclusion.

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

- At the time of the inspection, the school roll comprised of a small number of children across P1 to P7. As a result, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- Overall, attainment across the school in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Children achieve appropriate CfE levels at key milestones and stages and a few children are exceeding nationally expected levels.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children make good progress in listening and talking, reading and writing.

Listening and talking

- Younger children express ideas and show their understanding well by answering questions. Older children contribute ideas confidently when working in groups. They listen carefully, recount experiences and build on the ideas of peers well. All children present to audiences using appropriate verbal and non-verbal techniques. Younger children will benefit from further practice of turn-taking and older children should build confidence with note-taking.

Reading

- Younger children recognise initial letters and letter sounds. They are becoming more confident using their skills to try to read simple common words. Older children offer a personal preference for authors and the genre of books they enjoy. As appropriate to their age and stage, children read well with fluency and expression. All children will benefit from continuing to develop skills in creating and answering different types of questions.

Writing

- All children write regularly for a variety of purposes and audiences across genres, for example, writing instructions and creating poetry. As appropriate to their age and stage, children are developing their writing skills to include punctuation, connectives and interesting vocabulary. They will benefit from continued writing practice for real-life audiences and for different purposes across the curriculum.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics. Staff identified common gaps in children's learning in numeracy and mathematics and made changes to planning and experiences that have helped to address these.

Number, money and measure

- Younger children identify, recognise and order numbers up to 10. They use one-to-one correspondence with growing confidence to count a given number of objects. Older children demonstrate mental agility appropriate for their age and carry out calculations with growing speed and accuracy. When adding and subtracting, they select from an increasing range of known strategies and justify their choice. Children transfer their numeracy skills well when working with money and measure. Younger children recognise a growing range of coins. Older children convert between common units of measurement using decimal notation accurately. Across the school, children will benefit from regular practice applying their numeracy skills to real-life, relevant and meaningful contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- Children confidently name and discuss features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects appropriate to their stage of learning. Older children demonstrate a good understanding of angles and coordinates. Most children will benefit from practice understanding and using the vocabulary of position and movement.

Information handling

- Children benefit from applying their skills in information handling to real-life contexts, for example, a recent travel survey. Most understand how to create and understand Venn diagrams and use tallies accurately to count responses. Children should continue to build their skills through real-life, meaningful experiences. Older children should extend their skills by using digital technology to organise and display information, such as electronic spreadsheets and creating pie charts.

Attainment over time

- The headteacher makes effective use of a comprehensive local authority system to collate and track children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. She analyses assessment information well to identify where support is needed. The headteacher can demonstrate that overall, children make good progress over time and attain well. Where staff have targeted curricular areas to raise attainment for all children, such as writing, evidence shows accelerated progress. School data shows when children face barriers to their learning, they make good progress in their targeted areas of support.
- Children are making good progress in science over time. School staff have had a focus on improving the teaching of science. As a result, children build strong inquiry and investigative skills as they move through the school. They can analyse, interpret, evaluate and write about their scientific findings with confidence.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children have regular opportunities to share their successes in class and at assemblies. Their achievements are celebrated widely through certificates and special wall displays. Staff also recognise the personal achievements and important milestones in children's personal lives well. Working together as a school, children are proud of achieving national awards, such as those for sustainability and rights-based learning. The headteacher should continue to ensure children take part in local and national competitions and events. This will help to further build their sense of achievement and self-esteem.
- Children speak proudly about developing their leadership through creating and providing activities for peers and younger children. They enjoy a variety of school responsibilities, such as school captains, digital leaders and learning buddies. As children create and perform, for example the 'Tuishi Pamoja' show, they develop confidence and resilience.

- The headteacher tracks children's participation across school clubs and other achievement activities. She uses this information well to plan further opportunities for success. As planned, staff should now support children to make links between their achievements and the skills for learning, life and work.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff are focused on providing activities and experiences to overcome challenges faced by children and families in rural communities. Issues such as affordable transport, increased travel times and social isolation are carefully considered and addressed to ensure equitable experiences for children. Last session, funding and grants were used to provide trips and clubs for children. All children benefitted from new experiences, social events and visits to less familiar places, such as the theatre and the city. As a result, they developed resilience and confidence and built knowledge out with their own local lived experiences. Staff addressed effectively inequities faced by children living in rural areas and attending a small school. This session, staff are using a range of interventions, including the use of Pupil Equity Funding, to enhance play as a vehicle for learning and communication. The headteacher has clear measures in place to evaluate the impact of this work. Early evidence shows this approach is supporting children to make better progress in talking and listening.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The headteacher has established a close partnership with staff from the Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW) charity that is based in the village of Lumsden. Children's understanding of the role and impact of creative arts on people's lifelong interests, enjoyment and wellbeing is supported by engaging with artists, community members and creative people. Working together, the school and SSW staff plan valuable activities and events that enhance children's creativity and problem-solving, and develop their artistic skills. Children work on projects with artists-in-residence from around the world, supporting learning about personal, social and cultural identities. Through intergenerational community activities, children play, create and express themselves in different ways. For example, children explored a range of materials and developed their skills using knitting and crochet. As a result of this partnership approach, children develop important skills, specific to expressive arts and those which are transferable, such as analysing, exploring and reflecting. They are also developing their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of contemporary and historical arts within their own community.

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.