

# Summarised inspection findings

**St Gerardine School**

Moray Council

4 February 2025

## Key contextual information

St Gerardine Primary School is a non-denominational school serving the community of Lossiemouth. Forty percent of children reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 4 to 6 and almost all other children live in SIMDs 7-10. Lossiemouth is home to a Royal Airforce Base (RAF) base with a significant number of children from military families. The current roll is 313 children across 12 classes. Children's attendance is currently at 94%. This is in line with the national average and over the past few years this has been consistently above the local authority average. The RAF base holidays are linked to the English school holidays, so families often have time off in August and early September. This impacts on the overall attendance for the school. In September 2023 nine children had English as an additional language and 26% of children had a recorded additional support need (ASN). The headteacher has been in post for four years. The senior leadership team comprises of the headteacher and two full-time equivalent (FTE) deputy headteachers. One of the deputy headteacher posts is a job share and the other post is currently an acting position. An additional 0.4 FTE deputy headteacher post is funded through Strategic Equity Funding (SEF) to support children from families across the associated schools group (ASG).

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Children and staff engage in positive relationships across the school. They demonstrate the school values of respectful, responsible, resilient and kindness in interactions with each other. As a result, learning takes place in nurturing and supportive environments. Teachers use the language of the school values to shape all interactions with children. Children respond positively to these approaches and, as a result, interactions between children and staff are highly respectful. Children and staff are proud of their school and their community.
- Teachers have undertaken professional learning on sharing the purpose of learning which is leading to greater consistency across all stages. As a result, children are engaged in their learning and explain what they are learning in lessons. A majority of children are able to explain how they can be successful in their learning.
- Teachers work together to develop effective classroom layouts and resources that best support the needs of all children. There are well-considered common displays in all rooms and all classrooms have a designated calm space. Children access these spaces as required for short periods of time to support them to manage their emotions and so they can continue to collaborate with their peers. Children freely access resources in their classroom to support their sensory needs. As a result of such adaptations, children make good choices about strategies they can use to help them remain focused and engage positively in their learning.

- Senior leaders and children work together to review the use of shared social areas. Supported by staff, children led a consultation to gather the views of children, staff and parents. As a result of this consultation, changes such as mediators and playground pals rotas for different year groups and designated quieter areas have led to a reduction in conflict and behaviour concerns. This approach is supporting children to use the school values in their day-to-day interactions. Children now have greater ownership of play areas and feel well supported by staff.
- Key members of support staff and teachers have received outdoor learning training. Staff use the outdoor environment and local community well to deliver timetabled outdoor learning activities. Children benefit from a range of outdoor learning experiences relevant to the context of the school such as through learning which uses links across different subjects and community learning.
- Staff have participated in high-quality professional learning linked to the school's unique context. This includes the impact on children and families on deployments and work patterns and how best to support children's learning. Teachers are better informed and, as a result, have put in place supports and adaptations that best meet the needs of all children. Senior leaders work effectively with a wide variety of partners to support the needs of children and families.
- In most lessons, children engage in a range of learning activities such as whole class discussion, group work and independent tasks. Children use personal digital devices well for research and note taking. In a few lessons, digital learning links to the context of the lesson well. In a few lessons, the transition between different activities is too slow. As a result, children become disengaged from their learning. A few activities are not demanding enough which results in children not being sufficiently challenged in their learning. This is particularly evident when children can choose freely the activities they wanted to complete in lessons.
- In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear explanations and instructions. In almost all lessons, teachers make good use of questioning for understanding. In the best examples, teachers adapt their questions to suit the needs of all children. A few teachers use feedback from questioning to revisit learning if children's responses indicate they are not secure in their understanding. Almost all teachers provide high quality feedback to children. This supports children understand what their next steps in learning are. Teachers are developing their understanding of higher-order skills and how to make these explicit for learners. Children are beginning to link skills to their learning, particularly within their leadership groups.
- Staff at the early stages are developing play to support children's learning. Staff are responsive to children's interests and needs and encourage them to contribute to the selection of resources and activities. Children benefit from stimulating learning environments with natural resources. Staff should continue to take forward plans for developing and implementing agreed play pedagogy and continue to engage with evidence-based research, including national guidance.
- Teachers use a wide range of summative assessment approaches to confirm their judgement of children's progress. Almost all teachers use a variety of formative assessment strategies to track children's understanding in lessons. In the most effective examples, staff use this feedback to adapt learning to meet the needs of children. Staff engage effectively in a range of moderation activities within the school and associated school group (ASG) including with colleagues in secondary. The ASG identified numeracy and mathematics

as a priority for improvement. This is leading to greater consistency in the teaching of numeracy and mathematics. Teachers have created common assessments for all ASG schools. As a result, there is a common approach to teaching of numeracy and mathematics across the ASG, leading to an improved transition to secondary for children.

- Staff maintain detailed records of children's progress and attainment over time. Teachers meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss all children's progress and attainment. These meetings help to identify children who require additional support or increased challenge in their learning. The headteacher has introduced a highly collaborative 'team around the child' approach to tracking and monitoring children's progress. All key staff meet termly to discuss children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. They use a 'fact, story, action' approach. This ensures a clear focus on identifying children's strengths and areas for development. The team effectively identify key personnel to support each child including external partners. As a result, effective interventions are identified and implemented quickly. Senior leaders carefully monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.
- Teachers at all stages use a consistent approach to planning children's medium and long-term learning. They use Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes to ensure progressive learning pathways. Teachers collaborate very well with key support staff to plan effective learning activities for children who require additional support in their learning. A few children are benefitting from being involved in planning their own 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.

## 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

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Overall, children's attainment is above local authority averages for literacy. In numeracy, children's attainment in P4 and P7 is above local authority averages. Attainment in numeracy for P1 children is in line with local authority averages. Across the school, a few children are exceeding expected national levels of attainment in reading and numeracy.
- Most children, who require additional support with their learning, are making good progress against their individual targets for learning. A majority are on track to achieve nationally expected CfE levels.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in reading and listening and talking. The majority of children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment in writing. A few children at second level are exceeding expectations in reading and listening and talking. A few children at each stage could be achieving more and should be challenged further in their learning.

### Listening and talking

- At early level, most children enjoy exploring events and characters in stories and other texts. They are confident in sharing their knowledge through retelling stories using puppets and role play. Most children share their thoughts and feelings confidently during class discussions. At first level, most children contribute enthusiastically and are keen to answer questions in class. Almost all children at second level identify the difference between fact and opinion. Most children respond accurately to a range of questions, including literal and inferential questions. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular opportunities to work in pairs and small groups to develop their skills in taking turns and contributing at an appropriate time when engaging with others.

### Reading

- At early level, most children recognise and say the different single sounds made by letters. They are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds, letters, and patterns to read simple words. At first level, most children read with increasing fluency and expression. They use a range of strategies to decode new and unfamiliar words. They identify the main ideas in texts and talk about their favourite books and authors. Most children working at second level, read with fluency, understanding and expression. Most children apply a range of reading skills and strategies to read and understand texts, for example, skimming, scanning, predicting, and clarifying. Children at first and second levels should access a wider range of appropriately

challenging and age-appropriate texts. They need to develop their confidence in answering increasingly complex questions about the texts they are reading.

## Writing

- Across the school, teachers have undertaken effective professional learning to improve the explicit teaching of writing skills. They have developed a clear progressive structure which includes written feedback linked to skills. As a result, the quality of children's writing is improving.
- At early level, most children write sentences using capital letters and full stops. They use their knowledge of sounds confidently to spell familiar words accurately. At first level, children are beginning to convey information in different formats, including reports. They use common joining words to make sentences longer and more interesting. At second level, most children use notes well to develop their thinking and create new texts. Children at first and second level are writing more effectively for a wider range of purposes. For example, they write about the 'twenty's plenty' road traffic campaign, eye care tips and how to achieve global goals. All children would benefit from opportunities to revisit their writing to edit and improve their work based on feedback.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make good progress from prior levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are exceeding national expectations at second level.

## Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children are enthusiastic about maths. They confidently identify numbers to 20 and recall number sequences forwards and backwards within this range. Almost all children add and subtract within 10 and use comparative language to comment on the size of given objects. At first level the majority of children round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They are able to identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. Most children calculate the total spent and change to be given within £10. Almost all children identify appropriate instruments for measure. At second level, children round numbers to the nearest 1000, 10,000 and 100,000 accurately. Most children demonstrate an understanding of profit and loss and are able to solve money problems. They are able to identify a variety of methods for payment. Almost all children at second level would benefit from exploring decimals and percentages to support their understanding of this area.

## Shape, position and movement

- At early and first level, children correctly identify a range of two-dimensional (2D) shapes and identify shapes within their environment. Almost all children confidently use language of position and direction. At first level, children are beginning to use mathematical language to describe the properties of 2D shapes and three-dimensional (3D) objects. Almost all children should be supported to explore angles. At second level, most children identify properties of shapes using correct mathematical language. A minority of children confidently explore angles and scale.

## Information handling

- At early level, children would benefit from an increased number of opportunities to explore tally marks and interpret simple bar graphs. At first level, almost all children identify key features of bar graphs. They are able to confidently use tally marks to collect data. At second level, almost all children are able to identify a range of types of graphs and charts, including their key features.

## Attainment over time

- Senior leaders maintain a comprehensive school tracker which details the improvement in children's attainment over time. Senior leaders make very effective use of this tracker. As a result, they use this data to track any children not on track and supports are put in place quickly. The headteacher identified that attainment data prior to 2021 was not sufficiently reliable. She has taken effective steps to ensure data is now more rigorous. Teachers have engaged in moderation activities across the school and ASG and undertaken appropriate professional learning to improve teacher data analysis skills.
- Staff follow local authority guidance to effectively track and monitor attendance. They follow up with all families where children are not in school. Senior leaders meet fortnightly with the home school link teacher to identify any patterns or trends and agree appropriate supports. They act promptly where individual children's attendance dips. Staff's effective collaboration with parents and wider partners, is beginning to provide the right supports to reduce the frequency of absences. Senior leaders record all attendance concerns on pastoral notes. The school's data shows that the targeted and bespoke arrangements that are now in place are leading to improvements for a few families. As a result, attendance overall is improving.
- Attendance is in line with the national average but has shown a dip over the last few years. Attendance is impacted by the unique context of the school. Thirty-five percent of children in the school are service children. Before or after a parent is deployed families spend time at home together. This can often be during the school year. There are currently 17% of children with attendance below 90%.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements through class displays, assemblies and online. Almost all children contribute well to the life and ethos of the school through their participation in leadership groups. Children play a key role in driving the work of these groups. The school has achieved accreditation for work undertaken by some of these groups in relation to promoting children's rights and supporting environmental issues. Staff and children feel proud of these achievements and children are able to recognise the positive contribution they make to the life of the school and wider community by, for example, beach litter picks. Children have access to a wide range of after-school clubs which are well attended. Through these activities children are developing their communication and leadership skills. Staff are beginning to track children's participation in these activities and should work to embed this to help identify any gaps.
- Staff are beginning to support children to understand the higher-order skills that they are developing through their participation in leadership groups. Staff should also consider how skills can be developed progressively across the school within different areas of the curriculum.

## Equity for all learners

- All staff have a strong understanding of the socio-economic background of children, their family circumstances, and individual needs. Senior leaders and staff analyse a wealth of data to identify the attainment gap across the school and to identify where wellbeing support would be beneficial. Staff's collaborative progress and attainment meetings ensure support is well targeted and is having a positive impact on both attainment and wellbeing across the school.
- Senior leaders have taken steps to reduce the cost of the school day. A uniform bank ensures uniform is freely available to families and initiatives ensure that items such as bike helmets and bikes are available to children. Children work in collaboration with staff to apply for funding and to organise fundraising activities to minimise costs for families.



- Strategic Equity Funding has funded the Home School Link post. This member of staff works across the ASG to support children and their families. This has had a positive impact on the attendance of targeted children.
- Senior leaders discuss the use of PEF with members of the Parent Council. They should now consider consulting with parents and children on the focus of PEF.

## Other relevant evidence

- All classes receive two timetabled periods of physical education (PE) weekly. Teachers make effective use of indoor and outdoor spaces to deliver this. Senior leaders plan to collaborate with staff to review PE skills progression framework. They should review timetables to ensure all children receive two hours of high-quality PE each week.
- Children across all stages learn French, with teachers introducing older children to Spanish as an additional language. Staff ensure that children's modern language experiences are progressive and that children receive their entitlement to 1+2 languages.
- The school has a large and well-resourced central library as well as library areas within classrooms. Staff are adding additional books to the central library to help to support the children's understanding of important issues such as diversity and inclusion.
- Children receive their entitlement to religious and moral education in line with national expectations.

## 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.