

# Summarised inspection findings

**Arduthie Primary School and Nursery Class**

Aberdeenshire Council

14 January 2020

## Key contextual information

Arduthie Primary School and Nursery Class is a large school situated in a residential area close to Stonehaven town centre. It was built in the 19th century and there are concerns in the community about the poor fabric of the building and the impact this has on children's learning. At the time of the inspection the school roll was 417, with the nursery being registered for 65 children in the morning and the afternoon. Recently, there has been a few changes to the management and staff teams. The education authority has taken action to resolve this for the near future.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**satisfactory**

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 at Arduthie Primary School work well together as a team. They are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive learning environment and have formed positive relationships with the children, their families and the wider community.
- The senior leadership team (SLT) consulted with children, staff and parents to revise and update the school's vision, values and aims. These are now reflected in the school's plans for improvement. The vision, values and aims are displayed throughout the school, in classes and corridors. These should now be shared with the wider school community.
- Last session, the school's curriculum rationale was refreshed appropriately to reflect the new vision, values and aims. Children, staff and parents were involved in its review and development. The updated rationale reflects the context of the school and its community. Staff now need to make better use of this to influence and inform how they develop curricular pathways.
- Senior leaders introduced recently a systematic approach to self-evaluation. This is enabling them to make better informed judgements about the standards and quality of provision and outcomes for learners. They now need to monitor effectively the impact of the improvement plan. Staff work collaboratively to develop school priorities. Their focus on writing last session has been successful in raising attainment across the school. The SLT now need to improve the pace of change to develop further children's experiences across all curricular areas.
- Staff collegiate activities are linked appropriately to the school improvement priorities. Staff benefit from annual professional review meetings with senior leaders. They are positive about the opportunities they have to identify their professional learning needs. Practitioner enquiry should now be developed further to reflect the school improvement priorities and enable staff to continue to improve approaches to learning and teaching.
- The SLT has introduced a quality assurance calendar to monitor the quality of children's experiences including classroom observations and sampling of work. Last session, there was a

particular focus on writing and this development is impacting positively on outcomes for learners. Across the school, senior leaders and staff should use information from direct observations to promote and develop a shared understanding of effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment. The SLT recent introduction of “Learning Mirrors”, peer observations, should continue to be developed so that staff share good practice across the school. Staff would benefit from opportunities to observe areas of good practice in other schools, in particular to support moderation.

- The SLT meet termly with staff to monitor and track children’s progress and to plan any interventions to meet individual children’s needs. These meetings are beginning to improve staff’s confidence in making professional judgements based on the National Benchmarks and Scottish National Standardised Assessments.
- Across the school groups of children are developing their leadership skills as members of the pupil council, eco council and health committee, pupil focus groups and buddies. They organise and run clubs such as running, art and dance. Recently, a junior leadership team has been established to focus on continuous improvement. This team has made a good start in using “How Good is OUR School?” to evaluate the school’s strengths and areas of development. The SLT need to ensure that children at all levels can lead aspects of their own learning. This will help strengthen the children’s involvement in their school and continue to improve their leadership skills.

## 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

- Arduthie Primary School's vision, values and aims are used effectively by staff and children to influence decisions in the school. Children identify well with the school's values and can talk confidently about them. These values, which were established in consultation with children, staff, parents and partners, underpin the learning culture in most classrooms.
- The school has a very positive ethos. Respectful relationships exist between children and staff and amongst almost all children. Children are articulate, polite, well-mannered and keen to learn. Almost all children are enthusiastic about their learning and can talk knowledgeably about the ways in which they learn.
- Most children report that the school listens well to their views. They speak positively about the ways in which their voice is heard through a range of committees. The majority of children, consider that their views are acted upon. The SLT recognises that there is potential to extend the purpose and range of committees to include and involve more children to broaden their learning.
- Most children talk confidently about the tasks and activities that they are undertaking. Almost all children are motivated to learn and understand the purpose of their learning and what they need to do to be successful. In a few classes, children discuss with their teachers what they have to do in order to be successful. In most classes, staff share the purpose of learning with children. This is not yet consistent across all classes.
- Children across the school are developing their skills in peer and self-evaluation. Both staff and children recognise that quality feedback is crucial in supporting improvement. Through targeted career-long professional learning teachers have started to make good progress in this area. Staff recognise the need to embed consistent approaches in using targets and feedback as part of revised learning, teaching and assessment guidance and practice. Almost all children use targets well to improve their writing.
- In most classes, children participate willingly in a variety of tasks. The majority of these are teacher-directed. Children need to be given regular opportunities to become more independent and to lead their learning. Most children welcome recently developed approaches to providing additional challenge. Moving forward all children should be meaningfully challenged in their learning through staff delivering effective differentiation.
- The school should develop further its approaches to learning, teaching and assessment to ensure all children receive an appropriate level of pace and challenge to maximise their progress. Teachers are committed to professional learning to enhance their pedagogy. Improving the consistency of approaches to high quality learning, teaching and assessment should continue to be a focus of school self-evaluation and school improvement planning

- Almost all children are positive about the ways in which they learn. In the majority of classes, teachers use digital technologies well to enhance teaching. Children need more regular and ready access to digital tools to enhance their learning and teaching experiences.
- Children have a few opportunities to learn outdoors. This includes numeracy activities in the school grounds. The school's approach to outdoor learning requires to be reviewed and developed further to provide a planned and progressive pathway across the school.
- A variety of useful assessments are used by teachers to help inform staff, parents and children about their progress and attainment. This includes Scottish National Standardised Assessments, other standardised assessments, ongoing class assessments and a range of self and peer-assessment opportunities. Information related to children's progress and attainment is discussed and monitored by teachers and senior leaders. In literacy and in numeracy, this helps teachers to plan effectively for future learning. Staff also discuss suitable interventions to support and challenge children as required. A next step for the school will be to develop and maintain an overview of this information, so that all staff can monitor and track children's progress more easily.
- Staff are not yet collating information effectively on children's progress across all areas of the curriculum. There is potential to develop consistent approaches to assessment across the school. This will support staff to use assessment evidence to inform next steps in all curricular areas.
- Staff are at the early stages of using National Benchmarks for all curriculum areas. Through professional development and school-based opportunities for moderation, teachers are beginning to develop their confidence when making professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in writing. This now needs to extend to other areas of the curriculum.
- As staff become increasingly more confident in their judgement of the achievement of a CfE level, the SLT and staff should review the range of tools used to assess children's progress at various points in time. Staff now need to use assessment approaches and information gathered more effectively to support them to plan children's learning to secure progress. Senior leaders need to provide greater strategic direction to ensure consistency of learning, teaching and assessment approaches. This should include well-planned moderation within and beyond the school

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The school has developed a curriculum rationale, in collaboration with children, staff, parents and partners, which reflects the context of the school community. This rationale is displayed throughout the school but is not yet fully embedded in curriculum developments.
- The school has local authority learning pathways in place for all curricular areas. These pathways are based on the experiences and outcomes of CfE and the National Benchmarks. Senior leaders now need to work with staff to agree consistent approaches to planning for learning and assessment using Aberdeenshire Council's learning pathways. This work will support staff in using CfE experiences and outcomes to plan for learning and National Benchmarks to support assessment. There is potential for staff to engage with national guidance around the moderation cycle to inform this work.
- As planned by the school and as a priority, staff should develop a framework for health and wellbeing in Arduthie Primary School. This should take account of all organisers, to ensure that children benefit from an appropriately wide range of health and wellbeing knowledge, understanding and skills. Staff should ensure all planned programmes of learning are structured, progressive and relevant.
- Staff are at the early stages of developing a planned progressive pathway for developing children's digital technology skills. Children are given planned opportunities to develop word processing and research skills when practising literacy and numeracy skills. There is insufficient opportunity for them yet to develop digital skills in a progressive way.
- Children from P1 to P7 report that they enjoy learning French as part of the '1 plus 2' approach to modern languages. The school successfully uses a 'phrase of the week' initiative to raise the profile of language learning. Children from P6 and P7 are beginning to develop an understanding of Spanish culture and language. The school's approach to this area now needs to ensure that children progress and develop this aspect of their learning in a systematic manner in line with national guidance.
- Children have limited opportunities to learn outdoors. The school should develop and plan progressively its approaches to outdoor learning. This will extend children's opportunities to learn through outdoor contexts in the local environment.
- Most children benefit from the statutory two hours of quality physical education on a weekly basis. As a priority, senior leaders should ensure that all children benefit from this entitlement. This should involve the creative use of the school's outside area.
- There is a planned transition programme in place both from nursery to P1 and from P7 to Mackie Academy. The school should now work with children and their parents to evaluate the success of this programme. This evaluation should focus on establishing the success of the transition programmes in securing progression in learning.
- Overall, the school should collaborate with parents and partners to continue to review its curriculum. They should review its three-year curriculum plan to ensure that all children benefit from a curriculum which provides breadth, depth and challenge.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that their children enjoy being at Arduthie Primary School and that they are treated fairly and with respect. Parents appreciate the school's welcoming atmosphere and the positive relationships they have with the staff team.
- Feedback from a variety of parental engagement events indicates that most parents welcome these opportunities and find them beneficial. The school should develop further opportunities for parents to learn alongside their children.
- Children benefit from parents and partners supporting the work of the school in a variety of ways. For example, parent volunteers support activities in some classes and help with a variety of clubs and outings. Staff value this parental involvement.
- During curriculum focus weeks, information sessions from parents and local businesses contribute to the children's understanding of employability skills and broaden their awareness of employment opportunities. Senior managers need to develop a whole school approach to planned partnership working across the school to enhance children's area in this line of work.

## 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.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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 in Arduthie Primary School know the children and their families well. They have created a caring and respectful learning environment, which is built on strong relationships and a commitment to enable children to achieve their potential. As a result, almost all children report that they feel safe in school. Almost all children say that they have someone to talk to if they have a concern or worry. Children are polite, engaging and respectful. They speak confidently to visitors and take pride in their school. Almost all children agree that they learn how to treat others with respect and that teachers treat them with respect. The junior leadership team, along with staff and parents, has identified the need to review the school's friendship policy, anti-bullying policy and behaviour protocols. This review should ensure agreed approaches are restorative and recognise and celebrate positive relationships. All staff should develop further their understanding and effective use of restorative approaches to dealing with instances of challenging behaviour.
- Children have a basic awareness of the wellbeing indicators. Their understanding of these requires to be developed further. Children reflect termly on their own wellbeing, using the wellbeing web. Staff now need to make greater use of the wellbeing indicators to support children to understand their own progress in wellbeing. In time, as this develops, there is potential for the school to be better placed to demonstrate improved outcomes for children. Approaches to supporting children with resilience and self-regulation should be reviewed to ensure there are clear, relevant and consistent approaches across the school.
- Children are developing their understanding of health and wellbeing through taking part in a number of sports and activities during the school day, at lunchtime and after school. Over the year, children are involved in a range of sports including cross country running, hockey, tennis, netball and volleyball. Through these opportunities, children are developing an awareness of the importance of activity. They are increasing their interest and involvement in sports and a more active lifestyle. At P7, children take on the role of 'Wellbies', acting as buddies for younger children at break times. This is beginning to have a positive effect on relationships when children are at play, helping to foster positive values of respect and care.
- The school is beginning to track children's attendance and participation in clubs and activities through learning conversations with teachers. Staff need to develop and analyse the data further to help them identify attendance and participation over time. They then need to use this information to target those children who may miss out. In addition, children need to gain a better insight into the skills they are developing to support and enhance their wellbeing and learning.
- The strategic development of the health and wellbeing curriculum is at an early stage. Staff should consider how they are assessing children's health and wellbeing needs and evidencing progress, to ensure that they are improving the health and wellbeing outcomes for all children.

- Overall, the SLT has a good understanding of statutory requirements in relation to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Recently, there has been considerable change to the additional support for learning (ASL) staff team. The SLT and the new ASL teachers are beginning to develop an understanding of the whole school overview of the needs of all learners. The school has individual education plans (IEPs) for a few children, with appropriate targets in place, which are regularly reviewed. Staff also record strategies for children who are experiencing barriers to learning. Staff involve parents in planning meetings and include children's views when planning targets and next steps. Children should be more involved in setting their targets so that they take ownership of their learning. The SLT need to review the learning needs of children whose progress would be better supported through individual learning targets.
- The school engages well with a wide range of partners, such as psychological services, who help address children's barriers to learning. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to deliver interventions for identified children. The existing approaches to tracking the progress of children with additional support needs should be strengthened so that the effectiveness of interventions can be clearly evaluated.
- The school value of 'unique' encourages and supports an inclusive approach where children are welcomed, supported and well cared for. The school should update its approaches to promoting equality and diversity to reflect the changing nature of society.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- The school's 2018-19 data on achievement of CfE levels shows that by the end of P1, all children achieve early level in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. By the end of P4, almost all children achieve first level in listening and talking, writing and numeracy. Most children achieve first level in reading. By the end of P7, almost all children achieve second level in reading, listening and talking, writing and numeracy. This data reflected children's attainment and achievement.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, almost all children including those who have additional support needs are making good progress in literacy.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are making good progress in listening and talking. Almost all listen well in class and are articulate when discussing aspects of school life. They demonstrate respect for the ideas of others and respond to peers and adults appropriately. At early level, most children listen attentively to their teacher and are developing their skills in listening to one another and taking turns. Almost all speak confidently in a class situation and are enthusiastic about sharing their ideas. At first level, the majority of children take turns in a group discussion and listen respectfully to their peers. They are developing skills in recognising fact and opinion. At second level, almost all children express their views with confidence. They offer viewpoints, state preferences and justify their reasoning. Most confidently ask questions of their peers and build on the answers of others during discussions. Across the school, children need to develop their confidence and skills in speaking aloud to peers and a larger audience.

### Reading

- Across the school, almost all children are making good progress in reading. They talk enthusiastically about enjoying reading. At early level, children identify a number of initial sounds and are beginning to blend these together to make words. Almost all children can name a character in a known story. They enjoy listening and responding to stories. At first level, most children read aloud with fluency and expression. They are less confident in describing strategies they use to read an unfamiliar word. Almost all children identify favourite authors and explain their preference. Most children understand the different features of fiction and non-fiction books. At second level, most children read with fluency, understanding and expression. They use punctuation effectively to aid their understanding of the text. Almost all children identify a wide range of authors and different genres and can justify their opinions on preferred texts. Most children confidently answer inferential questions about their texts.

## Writing

- Across the school, almost all children are making very good progress in writing. Children's attainment in writing has improved since last session especially at the second level. At early level, most children are creating stories through talking about pictures and developing their ideas through play. Children are developing their letter formation. At first level, most children use appropriate punctuation and spell correctly commonly used words. Children write well for different purposes, for example, personal recounts, imaginative stories, poems and letters. They are beginning to understand the features of different genre. At second level, children demonstrate their knowledge of language through extended pieces of writing. Almost all children use a wide range of punctuation accurately and use dictionaries to check the spelling of unfamiliar words. They talk confidently about the features of different types of writing, such as news reports, poems, persuasive texts and recounts.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, almost all children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics, with a significant number exceeding national expectations for achievement of a level.

## Number, money and measure

- At early level, children are learning to recognise that an amount is the same regardless of how the objects appear. They are developing their skills in counting forwards and backwards within 10. Most children can identify a missing number within a sequence to 10. Almost all children recognise coins and develop their understanding of money through play. Children are learning about time sequences through daily routines. At first level, most children use correct mathematical language to explain and justify the strategies which they have chosen to solve problems involving all four processes. They can solve number problems with three-digit whole numbers. They accurately apply strategies in all areas of calculating change using money. At second level, almost all children can explain the link between a digit, its place and its value up to 1 million. They can partition a wide range of whole numbers and decimal fractions. At all stages children's skills in mental calculations are well developed. They are able to apply their knowledge to solve real life problems. As a result, across the school, children talk confidently about using number and money in real life contexts.

## Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise and name simple 2D shapes. Most children use positional language well to describe where an object is placed. Children can identify a line of symmetry in a drawing. At first level, almost all children use correct mathematical language to identify and describe the properties a range of 2D shapes and 3D objects. Most children correctly identify right angles and can accurately make comparisons using the properties of different types of angles. At second level, almost all children confidently use specific mathematical language to classify and describe a range of angles. They can calculate complementary and supplementary angles.

## Information handling

- At early level, children match and sort objects according to simple criteria. They use simple signs to support choices during everyday activities. At first level, almost all children can extract data information from a variety of charts, graphs and tables. They can select and use appropriate strategies to gather and sort data for a range of purposes. At second level, almost all children can discuss ways of collecting and representing data. Across the school, children would benefit from additional opportunities to make effective use of digital technology to create graphs and charts.

## Attainment over time

- The school has attainment data for literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics for the past four years. Over this period, children's progress in reading has remained relatively consistent, with almost all achieving appropriate CfE levels. The proportion of children achieving appropriate CfE levels in writing has fluctuated during this time. Following a dip in attainment in writing in 2017-18, a school focus on improving approaches to the teaching of writing resulted in increased attainment in 2018-19, especially at second level. Children's progress in listening and talking has remained stable, with almost all children attaining appropriate CfE levels during this time. In numeracy, attainment has remained at a high level, with almost all children achieving national expectations.
- Staff have taken part in a few moderation activities within the school. These have focused on aspects of literacy. The school should continue its plan to further develop moderation processes, ensuring that moderation activities focus on raising expectations of standards and lead to children being challenged more in all areas of their learning across the curriculum.

## Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Most children achieve well. Children talk with pride about their achievements, and their contribution to schools life. Children develop relevant skills, including leading and working well with others. At P7 children in P7 speak enthusiastically about their responsibilities as buddies to children in P1, which are developing their skills as mentors. Children also achieve considerable success through a wide range of sports activities, in the school and in the local community. For example, children participate in intergenerational projects with local care homes; take part in a beach clean-up; visit the local allotment; and attend a range of sports clubs within the community. Children across the school are developing enterprising skills. For example, at P5, children organised a recent charity fundraising event for MacMillan Cancer Research. This is supporting them to develop their entrepreneurial and leadership skills.
- Staff monitor children's attendance at clubs. This allows staff to identify children who may be at risk of missing out from these wider opportunities. The school should continue with its plan to introduce a profiling system to ensure that children record, track and reflect on their learning, skills development and achievements.

## Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff know the children and local context well. They provide interventions to address individual children's needs. Senior leaders monitor attainment for all children within the school, including groups of children at risk. Resources and interventions are targeted to support children who may experience barriers to their learning. Additional support staffing, funded by the Pupil Equity Fund, is helping to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Arrangements are in place to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent children from taking part in opportunities for wider achievement.

## Choice of QI: 1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
  - Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
  - Impact on learners' successes and achievements
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- The school is developing a systematic approach to gathering staffs', children's and parents' views as part of its approach to self-evaluation. This includes questionnaires, focus groups and staff discussions around areas for improvement. Staff use How good is our school? 4<sup>th</sup> edition (HGIOS4) and How good is our early learning and childcare? (HGIOELC) to engage in self-evaluation activities, which inform the school's continuous improvement agenda. They use the challenge questions to reflect on the school's areas of strength and development. Staffs' views are taken into account, along with relevant data, to decide on the school's areas for improvement. Staff development sessions are then planned to focus on the improvement plan priorities. Increasingly, staff are taking on leadership roles including writing skills, learning and teaching strategies and as digital leaders. Pupil participation is being encouraged and developed by the introduction of the junior leadership team. The junior leadership team is using How good is OUR school? (HGIOURS) to evaluate the school's strengths and areas for development from the children's point of view.
  - Quality assurance procedures including senior leaders' observations, peer observations, jotter sampling, pupil focus groups and monitoring and tracking meetings inform the self-evaluation process. These approaches provide information about the quality of learning and teaching and how this can be further improved to ensure positive outcomes for all children. The school has clear evidence to demonstrate the impact of the focus on improving children's writing skills. Moderation is an area which requires to be further developed to establish agreed standards and expectations across the school and cluster.

## Other relevant evidence

The school and education authority should carry out risk assessments of the fabric of the school building to assure themselves of the safety of children and staff at all times. The inspection team observed significant parts of the building which are not well maintained and pose a risk to the children's and staff's health and wellbeing.

The education authority should provide Education Scotland with an update as soon as is practically possible.

## 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.