

# Summarised inspection findings

Happyhansel Primary School

Shetland Islands Council

27 June 2023

## Key contextual information

Happyhansel Primary School and Nursery Class is located in the village of Walls, on the west side of Shetland, within Shetland Islands Council. The headteacher was appointed to the substantive post in October 2022, following a period of two years as acting headteacher. She has overall strategic responsibility for the Happyhansel Nursery Class. She also is the headteacher for Sandness School on Shetland.

The current roll of the school is 33 children working over two classes. The school has one principal teacher who is class committed apart from one morning per week. There is also one other full-time teacher. There is an additional support needs teacher for one day per week. There are visiting teachers who specialise in music, art and physical education (PE). There are three learning support assistants who share one full time equivalent post and two learning support workers.

In September 2021, almost all children lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 6 to 8. Approximately 40% of children in the school have additional support needs.

### 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

- The headteacher and all staff successfully promote a positive culture and ethos in Happyhansel Primary School. The headteacher revised the school vision, values, aims and motto last session in collaboration with all stakeholders. Staff very recently explored with children the ways that the school motto of 'encourage, strive and achieve' supports them in their learning. Children can provide practical examples of when they use the motto in meaningful ways. However, they are not clear about the relationship between the aims, vision, values and motto. The headteacher and staff should now support children to understand and use the vision, values and aims more effectively. This will enable all staff and children to know and use these to underpin the work of the school and drive forward the direction of change.
- Following a period of changes to staffing, high levels of staff absence and COVID-19, the headteacher is beginning to bring stability to the school community. She has a clear understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. Staff, parents and partners describe the positive impact she is having on the ethos and culture of the school. The headteacher and all staff understand clearly that the school is an integral part of the local community. They are proactive in seeking out partners from the local community to enhance children's learning experiences and improve their outcomes. This is supporting staff, parents and partners to work together well and is beginning to increase the school's capacity for change and improvement.

- All staff are committed to change to improve outcomes for learners. They work effectively as a team to bring about change and improvement. Staff use *How good is our school?* (4<sup>th</sup> edition) to evaluate the quality of their work and identify improvement priorities. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, they identified through self-evaluation the need to adopt a more nurturing ethos. Staff undertook useful professional learning on using nurturing approaches which is enabling them to meet children's wellbeing needs more effectively. Other school improvement priorities for this session include developing consistent approaches to assessment of children's learning and creating a whole school writing policy. Staff are in the early stages of developing these priorities. The headteacher and staff should now increase the pace of change and take forward improvement priorities as planned.
- The headteacher has undertaken quality assurance activities to gather evidence about the school's strengths and areas for development. This work is giving staff useful formal opportunities to review and improve approaches to learning and teaching. For example, teachers recently peer reviewed children's jotters which led them to implement successfully a consistent system for children to self-assess their work. The headteacher now needs to ensure that all quality assurance activities lead to clear action points. The headteacher should align quality assurance activities more clearly to the decisions staff make about children's progress and attainment. This will ensure that quality assurance activities contribute to a robust evidence base about children's progress and achievement.
- Staff are committed to using professional learning to improve their skills and knowledge. Teachers use the General Teaching Council of Scotland Standards for Full Registration well to reflect on their practice and set professional development goals. The headteacher protects time for staff to work together to develop and improve their skills and knowledge. They have useful opportunities to collaborate with schools and partners from across Shetland, which is having a positive impact on the quality of learning and teaching. The headteacher identifies that providing staff with further opportunities for professional collaboration and learning, linked clearly to school improvement priorities, will improve outcomes for children.
- All children have useful opportunities to contribute to the wider life of the school through their involvement in 'task' groups. These 'task' groups build children's confidence and leadership skills well. Children describe examples of where their work in these groups has led to meaningful change. For example, the pupil council very recently made suggestions to improve their experiences during wet plays. They now lead other children in games in the gym during wet plays. Children would now benefit from using *How good is OUR school?* This should develop their leadership skills further and support them to be more involved in decisions about school improvement priorities.
- The school receives Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The headteacher used part of this funding to support identified children to develop their collaborative working skills. However, staff did not gather robust evidence to measure accurately the impact of this work. The headteacher should ensure that there is robust evidence that demonstrates that the use of PEF is helping to accelerate the attainment and achievement of identified children.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

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

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

- Children are eager and respectful learners. They are proud of their school. All staff know children as individuals and positive relationships between children and adults are evident. Building on these positive relationships, staff should now develop teaching approaches that clearly reflect school values and children's rights.
- Across the school, most children engage well in their learning. They listen to instructions and support each other well in pairs and groups during tasks and activities. Children have some element of choice in their learning. However, this is mostly about follow up tasks or the order in which they complete tasks. Staff should provide children with more opportunities to set personalised targets and choose contexts for learning. This will support children to be clear about their next steps and have more independence in their learning.
- Teachers organise their classrooms to take account of the different needs of children within a multi-stage composite class. They use task boards well and set activities that children follow independently. This enables teachers to provide direct instruction for groups of children who are working at the same stage. Teachers should now ensure that all tasks and activities are purposeful and designed to ensure all children make good progress in their learning.
- Children have regular opportunities to learn outdoors. For example, children take mathematics and science lessons outside and they grow fruit and vegetables in the school grounds. This is supporting children's engagement well and providing them with effective learning in new contexts. Teachers support children to use digital technology to enhance their learning. For example, children develop their research skills and expand their learning through research tasks. The school is well-equipped with laptops and devices. Staff should use this technology to greater effect to ensure children develop their digital skills in a progressive way.
- Teachers are beginning to develop play-based learning in the early stages. Children have opportunities to influence the classroom environment according to their interests which is helping them to explore and be curious. Teachers interact well with children and encourage them to be confident learners. The headteacher, along with class teachers, should continue to use national guidance and research to develop play pedagogy more fully across the school. It would be helpful for teachers to work more closely with practitioners in the nursery class for this.
- Teachers provide children with clear explanations and instructions in almost all lessons. They support children well to understand the purpose of their learning in the majority of lessons. Teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding during most lessons. They should now use higher order questions to extend children's thinking and deepen their

understanding. Teachers plan learning to support children working at different stages within each class. However, they need to ensure that learning is set at the right level of difficulty for all children. A number of children are capable of achieving more and teachers should increase the level of challenge for them.

- Teachers provide children with useful oral feedback during learning. They observe children well during teaching and intervene timeously to provide further instruction as required. This helps children to know what they are doing well and supports their understanding. They should now work together to ensure approaches to written feedback are of a consistent high quality. Overall, there is a need to ensure that high-quality learning and teaching is delivered consistently across the school. Teachers should now work together to explore the features of a good lesson and develop a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching.
- Class teachers assess children's progress and attainment regularly in literacy and numeracy using a range of assessment tools. Teachers use the assessment evidence in children's learning journal to support their professional judgements about children's attainment. They have useful discussions with the headteacher to decide on children's progress. However, these discussions need to be based on more robust evidence. Teachers need clearer guidance about the range of assessment evidence they gather to ensure it demonstrates children's breadth, depth and application of learning. Further engagement with the National Benchmarks will support teachers in taking this forward.
- Children have a few opportunities to self- and peer-assess their work. Older children self-assess extended pieces of writing using measures of success. This is helping them to identify accurately what they are doing well and their next steps. Teachers should provide children with more opportunities to set measures of success for their learning across other curricular areas. This will support children to have more ownership of their learning, reflect on their strengths and be clearer about their next steps.
- Teachers are beginning to engage in moderation activities with staff across the Westside cluster. For example, they moderated approaches to the teaching of writing this year. This work is helping staff to improve children's vocabulary and increase their engagement in and enjoyment of writing. Staff should seek out more regular opportunities to engage in moderation activities beyond the school to increase their understanding of national standards.
- Teachers plan over different timescales for each stage of their class using the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). They use helpful progressive planning frameworks for literacy and numeracy. Teachers take account of multi-stage composites using a range of planning formats for other curricular areas. For example, they use annual overviews, local authority planners and teacher developed formats. When used effectively, these planning formats ensure children have a broad coverage of the experiences and outcomes of CfE. However, there is a need to streamline and develop planning processes to make planning more cohesive and progressive across all curricular areas. This should help to provide an appropriate pace of learning and ensure sufficient challenge for all children.
- Teachers record children's progress on a class tracker twice a year and meet with the headteacher to discuss the progress children are making. These meetings support the headteacher and teachers to have a useful overview of children's learning and progress. The headteacher recognises that these tracking meetings need to involve a more robust review of assessment evidence to ensure it is valid. This should support staff to make more accurate decisions about children's progress and attainment. It would be of benefit to align the timing of

tracking discussions to quality assurance processes which would add further evidence to support their decisions.

- During tracking meetings, the headteacher and staff identify children who require support individually or in small groups. Children receive targeted support as required from learning support assistants. Teachers meet regularly to set targets for children and discuss their progress. The headteacher and class teachers should ensure they set specific targets and measures of success for children. This will help them to identify the interventions that make the biggest difference to children's outcomes.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use a range of planning formats to plan children's learning across all areas of the curriculum using the experiences and outcomes of CfE. They use helpful planning pathways for literacy and numeracy which support progression in these areas. Teachers developed a three-year overview successfully to plan learning that links different curricular areas. The headteacher should now support all staff to agree and use consistently cohesive planning processes across all curricular areas.
- Children have useful opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. For example, children in younger stages of the school made chess boards using their measuring skills. Staff should plan opportunities for children to apply their skills in new contexts more regularly.
- Partners, the local community and parents support and enhance the curriculum effectively. For example, children at second level have useful opportunities to programme robots during their work with a visiting science partner. Children enjoy weekly knitting lessons from a member of the local community in the 'Peerie Maakers'.
- Visiting specialists in music, art and PE ensure that children receive their entitlement to high quality learning in these areas. Throughout the school children's art is valued and celebrated in attractive displays. All children from P5 onwards have the opportunity to learn the accordion or the fiddle. This is developing their skills in reading music and performing. Children learn French as a modern language and older children are currently learning sign language.



## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents are satisfied with the school and feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. A few parents would like more regular information about their child's progress and the ways that their child is assessed. As planned, the headteacher and staff should create more opportunities for parents to be involved in understanding their child's progress and learning.
- The headteacher communicates with parents in a range of ways. This includes a recently created digital application designed to improve communication. Parents spoke positively about a newsletter system that was in place previously. This helped them to have information well in advance about planned events and activities.
- Parents contribute to the life and work of the school in highly effective ways. They worked successfully in partnership with parents from another local school to organise a traditional Shetland dancing community event. This helps children to feel valued and have a good understanding of their local culture and heritage.
- Most parents feel they are encouraged to be involved in the work of the Parent Council and that they are informed about their work. The Parent Council works very effectively with the pupil council. They meet regularly to talk about the school and share their ideas for school improvement. Children and adults would benefit from working together using How good is OUR school? This will increase their voice in school improvement planning.



## 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

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 headteacher and all staff place high importance on supporting and improving the wellbeing of children and their families. Staff are kind and caring towards children and they have mutually respectful relationships. Almost all children say the school helps them to understand and respect other people. The majority of children express that they feel safe in school.
- Children are beginning to know and understand their rights and those of others. They discuss the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at assemblies. As planned, staff should support children to learn about their rights and how their rights impact on them in everyday contexts.
- Children complete 'wellbeing webs' using the wellbeing indicators twice a year. They reflect on their wellbeing to outline areas in which they feel confident and those where they would benefit from support. This is supporting children well to understand the wellbeing indicators in relevant ways. Children can request support from a trusted adult to discuss areas of concern. Most children feel they have a trusted adult they can talk to if they are upset or worried.
- The health and wellbeing curriculum is supporting children's wellbeing effectively. Children are aware of the factors that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and how to keep themselves healthy. All children have opportunities to take part in after school and lunchtime clubs which support them well to develop their teamworking and physical skills. Children participated in a whole day event at a local leisure centre to learn new sports, such as fencing and boccia. As a result, children are developing their physical health successfully. Children would like more opportunities to use the large outdoor multi-court area. The Parent Council has been proactive in working with the school and local authority to seek improvements to the multi-court area.
- Children enjoy working in the Polycrub tunnel to grow a wide range of fruit and vegetables. This is helping them to understand where our food comes from and how to have a healthy diet. Children grow plants from seedlings and sell them at a plant sale. This is helping children to learn about sustainability and is improving their skills for life and work.
- Following the return to in-school learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff identified the need to support children's emotional wellbeing. They implemented whole school nurturing approaches which are having a positive impact on children's confidence and resilience. Children at early and first level consider their emotional wellbeing as part of a daily check-in. This shared vocabulary to describe emotional wellbeing is supporting children effectively to understand and manage their own wellbeing needs.

- Staff plan transitions well to support children effectively as they move into P1 and on to S1. This builds children's confidence and supports them to manage change successfully. The headteacher is proactive in providing opportunities for children to mix with children from other schools on Shetland. For example, she organised a joint sports day with two other local primaries. These opportunities help children to develop their social skills within a wider group of peers.
- The headteacher and staff are aware of their statutory duties. The headteacher follows local authority guidance appropriately when situations and needs arise. All staff receive annual training in child protection and safeguarding. The headteacher tracks the attendance of children closely and attendance levels are in line with the national average.
- Staff identify children who require targeted support in learning during tracking meetings. Learning support assistants provide targeted support for identified children which can be for a short period of time or over the longer term. The headteacher and staff work effectively with a range of partners to support children with identified barriers to learning. They meet regularly to agree support and intervention packages and create Individual Education Plans (IEP). Parents and children's views are sought when agreeing IEP targets and reviewing the progress children are making. Children with additional support needs are making satisfactory progress towards individual targets. The headteacher and staff should ensure that targets for children receiving support are specific and measurable. This will help them to be clear about the progress children are making.
- The school has an attractive sensory support space. Learning support workers provide children with sensitive and valuable support in these spaces. This supports children well to self-regulate and feel calm.
- This session, staff developed a whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour which supports children and staff well to build positive and respectful relationships. Across the school children are well-behaved and have formed successful friendships. A minority of parents do not agree that the school deals well with bullying incidents. Staff should continue to apply the principles of the school's positive behaviour policy and ensure all children and parents receive feedback about follow-up actions for bullying incidents.
- A strong partnership with Ability Shetland is supporting inclusion well. The headteacher and Ability Shetland staff create opportunities for children to mix with others from across Shetland. Families enjoy the peer support during these times. This is helping children and their families to feel included in their community.
- All children are members of a school 'task' group. This is helping them to be responsible citizens and make an effective contribution to the school and local community. Children need further support to be clear about the skills they are developing in their 'task' groups.
- The headteacher and staff at Happyhansel Primary School support children effectively to see themselves as global citizens. Children recently worked with a school partner to increase their understanding of how specific barriers to learning can impact on people. This is helping children to understand the strengths and needs of others. Children learn about different beliefs through the religious education curriculum. Staff should continue to seek out opportunities for children to learn about other races, beliefs and protected characteristics.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

#### Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Happyhansel Primary School is a small school with two multi-stage composite classes. Because of this, attainment and progress will be expressed in 'overall' statements, rather than for specific year groups or CfE levels.
- The school submitted attainment data based on tracking information. Although staff are beginning to have more confidence in children's achievement of a level, the data submitted by the school is not yet fully accurate. Staff need to develop further their assessment processes and engage further with the National Benchmarks to support their overall judgements of children's progress.
- Overall, the majority of children achieve, or are on track to achieve, appropriate levels of attainment in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy. Across the school, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Children's levels of attainment are strongest at the upper school. At the earlier stages, there is a need to provide greater pace and challenge in learning to raise children's level of attainment.
- Children requiring additional support in their learning are making satisfactory progress towards individual targets.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in reading and writing and good progress in listening and talking. The headteacher should ensure that children's progress in listening and talking is carefully planned and tracked. This will enable staff to clearly evidence the progress children are making.

#### Listening and talking

- Across the school, children listen to and follow age-appropriate instructions and share their thoughts and ideas in a respectful way during group discussions. They have regular opportunities to use the local Shetland dialect. For example, they recently heard Shetland poetry read by a local poet. Older children apply their talking and listening skills well to discuss and agree on shared protocols for health and wellbeing lessons. Across the school children would benefit from opportunities to speak to a wider range of audiences for different purposes.

## Reading

- Children make effective use of the recently refreshed school library to enjoy reading for pleasure. Children borrow books regularly to read at home and are enthusiastic readers. This is helping to develop their knowledge of different genres and authors.
- Younger children enjoy exploring books and texts to identify and talk about characters in a story. They use their knowledge of sounds and letters to decode words. Children in the middle stages, read unfamiliar texts well. They need more challenging texts for their class reader to develop reading skills such as predicting or summarising. Older children read a wide range of authors and can describe their preferences for an author with reference to character, setting and genre. They need more practice in asking and answering inferential and evaluative questions.

## Writing

- Across the school, teachers are implementing approaches which are increasing children's engagement in writing and the level of vocabulary they use in texts. This is beginning to impact positively on attainment. Children at the lower stages copy sentences and create short pieces of text using capital letters and full stops. Children in the middle stages sequence stories successfully. They use simple conjunctions to add length and interest to their writing. Children need more opportunities to create an extended range of texts independently. At the upper stages, children write within a range of genres, for example, newspaper reports and letters. They plan discursive writing pieces and consider the main ideas and supporting details to explain a point of view.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics.

## Number, money and measure

- Across the school, children enjoy using a range of measuring instruments to estimate and measure lengths in centimetres and metres. Older children identify units of measure for temperature using negative numbers. At the lower stages of the school, there is a need to support children's understanding of number processes. Younger children count forwards and backwards up to at least 30. Children in the lower stages are developing their understanding of fractions to find halves and quarters of whole numbers. Older children are more confident with number processes. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentage and can convert percentages to decimals. They are less confident when finding fractions of an amount.

## Shape, position and movement

- Across the school, children identify a range of two-dimensional shapes or three-dimensional objects and describe their properties in an age-appropriate way. Younger children describe right angles and identify them in common shapes. Older children accurately measure and draw a range of angles.

## Information handling

- Across the school, children use a range of charts and graphs to classify and sort information. Younger children sort objects according to specific criteria such as shape and colour. At the middle and upper stages, children interpret information from graphs to draw conclusions about data. At all stages, children would benefit from using digital technology to record, collect and display data.

## Attainment over time

- Fluctuations in the small school roll mean that trends in attainment over time are hard to demonstrate. The school's attainment data demonstrates that children's attainment increases as they move through the school. Teachers track individual children's attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. As assessment processes become more robust, teachers will make more accurate judgements about children's attainment. The headteacher should ensure there is a sharper focus on measuring reliably the progress children make over time.

## Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children have regular opportunities to experience success through a range of clubs and committees. All children are members of a leadership 'task' group such as the Junior Road Safety Officers and the health committee. These are building children's teamwork and citizenship skills well. As a next step, staff should ensure that children are clear about the skills they are developing through their involvement in these groups.
- Children contribute well to their local community through, for example, Christmas performances or the annual Shetland beach clean (Da Voar Redd Up). This is developing children's performance skills and supporting them to be effective contributors.
- Children's achievements both in and out of school are shared and celebrated. Children enjoy receiving certificates at assemblies for their achievements. A system to track children's achievements is in place but it is not yet used consistently. The headteacher should now ensure this achievement tracker is used and updated regularly. This will ensure no child is at risk of missing out.
- The parent community is highly supportive of the school and is helping to widen children's achievements. For example, parents supported children to take part in the local 'Up Helly Aa' fire festival. Children performed at the local care home and in the Community Hall. This is building children's citizenship skills well and helping them to feel valued as part of the local community.

## Equity for all learners

- All staff have a good understanding of the school's island and rural context. They know children and their families well. The headteacher recognises the impact of the cost of living crisis on families. She is sensitive in signposting families via email to partner agencies who provide financial support when required. Children can use the free 'grab and go' breakfast tray which is available every morning. All school trips are free of charge and fun days have a minimal or no charge. This ensures that all children can participate fully in all aspects of school life.
- The Parent Council organises a Christmas gift shop, where children can buy presents for family members at a lower cost. Children participate in fundraising events to provide charitable donations to other groups.
- The school receives PEF to accelerate the progress of children impacted by poverty. The headteacher needs to ensure that there is robust evidence to demonstrate the impact of this funding on children's outcomes.

## 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.