

# Summarised inspection findings

**Kinellar School**

Aberdeenshire Council

12 March 2024

## Key contextual information

Kinellar Primary School and nursery class is situated in the village of Blackburn, Aberdeenshire, on the outskirts of Aberdeen City. At the time of inspection, the school roll in the primary was 348 children. The headteacher has been in post for eight years. There are two depute headteachers.

In September 2022, no pupils lived in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. The majority (67.4%) of pupils live in the 40% least deprived datazones in Scotland.

The school periodically welcomes children from diverse backgrounds where they have a main language other than English. At times these families are very transient and stay at the school for a limited period of time.

### 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

- Across the school, all staff and children model the school values of respect, happiness, honesty and achievement. Staff know the children and families very well. They work well together to create a nurturing, respectful and inclusive learning environment. As a result, children are happy, feel safe and enjoy learning. Most children are developing well a positive understanding of their rights under the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. Staff have high aspirations and value relationships as the key driver for learning and engagement.
- Most children are enthusiastic and engage well in lessons. Almost all children enjoy the wide range of learning experiences and spaces on offer. Staff have created attractive, well-resourced and purposeful learning environments which provide places for children to develop their creative and independence skills. In most classes, children's experiences are appropriately challenging and enjoyable. Children are aware of the purpose of the learning and the majority are aware of what success will look like. Teachers should consistently revisit measures of success during lessons to check children's understanding. Children could be more involved in co-creating success criteria to support further their understanding of how to be successful in their learning.
- Children across the school have regular opportunities to learn and develop skills through play. This includes, for example, in the upper classes, where children plan their play and the skills they will develop. They articulate these skills very well. For example, they talk confidently about learning to be creative, solving problems and collaborating effectively. Teachers are developing play pedagogy successfully across the school. They continue to review and evaluate the impact of this approach. As a next step, teachers and senior leaders should ensure there is planned time to observe younger children at play at the early stages. This will allow staff to

deepen and extend children's skills and interests appropriately, ensuring breadth and challenge for all children.

- In most lessons, teachers' instructions are clear. They link learning frequently to real-life contexts and children's prior learning. Children learn well in groups, pairs and individually and have regular opportunities to think about, reflect and discuss learning. In most lessons, teachers use questioning well to check for children's understanding. In most classes, teachers extend children's understanding through the effective use of thinking time to help children expand their answers. Most teachers use verbal and written feedback well to support children to improve their work. All teachers should ensure feedback is linked clearly to planned learning and that children have opportunities to reflect on this feedback to improve their work.
- Teachers use the 'Kinellar Position Statement' effectively to support the development of a clear rationale and expectations for learning and teaching. As a result in most classes, children participate well in learning which is planned to meet their needs effectively. In a majority of lessons, children have opportunities to share their views and shape their learning. Senior leaders should ensure that children are aware of the difference sharing their opinions has made.
- Senior leaders and teachers have developed successfully the language of skills across the school. Most children talk confidently about the skills they are learning and their relevance in learning which links across different curricular areas and play. For example, they demonstrate these skills well in their daily learning interactions and in leadership roles, including class as ambassadors and providing each other with meaningful feedback on learning.
- All teaching staff use a practitioner enquiry approach to research and adopt new approaches in their learning and teaching. Teachers speak positively about their areas of interest and the benefits to their own professional development from this approach. They are now beginning to see a positive impact on learner's experiences in the classroom as a result of these studies. For example, they develop the use of explicit thinking time to deepen children's understanding, which children demonstrate well in class.
- All teachers use interactive whiteboards and digital devices to support children's learning well. They use digital tools creatively to motivate children. For example, in a recent initiative children used gaming to develop further their digital technology skills. Children have regular opportunities to use laptops and tablets to enhance and support their learning. A few children also extend their digital skills in the coding club, when using matrix bar codes or undertaking research online. In their profiles, children share their achievements and learning with parents, set targets for learning and use their digital technology skills to record and evidence their learning.
- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches effectively to evidence children's progress and attainment. They use this evidence well to plan future learning opportunities and to identify children who require further support with their learning. Teachers and senior leaders use the national benchmarks to review assessment evidence and agree their professional judgements about children's progress and achievements. Staff are developing a robust understanding of national standards and welcome opportunities to take part in moderation activities at school and cluster level. These activities ensure that teacher judgements are becoming increasingly reliable and robust. Senior leaders recognise the importance of assessment being integral to the planning of learning and teaching. As planned, teachers should now plan high quality assessments which allow children to demonstrate application of skills and knowledge in new and unfamiliar contexts.

- Teachers adopt consistent approaches to planning learning and teaching. They plan lessons well based on Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) experiences and outcomes and link lessons to the national Benchmarks. This is supporting them to deliver progressive learning experiences for children across all curriculum areas. Senior leaders have introduced robust tracking of children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They meet with teachers twice each session to discuss and monitor children's progress. They identify children who are on track as well as those who require additional support and challenge. Collectively they discuss strategies, resources or interventions to support groups of children or individuals. Senior leaders and teachers monitor and review their attainment data to ensure interventions are impacting positively on children's learning and outcomes. Senior leaders have identified the need to now track children's progress and achievement in other curricular areas.

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

### 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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good. A minority of children across all levels are exceeding national expectations in their overall attainment. Senior leaders and teachers track children's progress very well. Most children across the school are achieving national expectations in literacy and numeracy.
- Most children who need additional support with their learning are making very good progress against personalised individual targets. Senior leaders and teachers monitor targeted cohorts of children's attainment very well.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children make very good progress in reading, listening and talking. Children's progress in writing is good. A minority of children exceed expected levels of progress across the school.

#### Listening and talking

- At early level, almost all children listen well to everyday instructions and prompts. Almost all children at first level talk confidently about the purpose of their learning linked to, for example, skills they are developing. At second level, almost all children are developing well their understanding and application of a variety of listening and talking skills. When they have opportunities to address an audience, most children display confidence and enthusiasm. They are aware of the skills they are developing. This is a clear strength across most classes in the school.

#### Reading

- As a result of the school's culturally diverse community, staff are improving the availability of ethnically diverse reading material available for children at the school's library. This helps children to choose reading materials which reflect their cultural background and customs.
- Most children at early level are beginning to blend letters and sounds well. There is scope for a few children to improve their reading skills at a faster pace. At first level, most children are confident in identifying a variety of literary techniques from a range of genres. For example, children identify similes, metaphors, imagery and personification. Most children confidently apply these techniques in their own writing for a variety of purposes. At second level, most children can identify a wide range of grammar, punctuation and language choice identified in a text, to improve their own writing.

## Writing

- Teachers' approaches to improving writing at every stage across the school are having a positive impact on children's progress. As a result, more children are exceeding national expectations and larger numbers of children are now making good progress against national standards and expectations.
- Most children at early level are beginning to develop independent writing skills. They are exploring sounds, letters and words and discovering how they work together. At first level, most children are developing well their ability to use sentence structure, word choice and punctuation to vary style, tone and imagery. At second level, almost all children enjoy writing for a range of purposes. They write more extended texts with confidence and are developing well skills in order to evaluate each other's work. A few children who require ongoing additional support to develop skills in organising ideas and thoughts in their writing receive very effective support from their class teachers and pupil support assistants. As a result, they are making good progress against the individualised targets set by their teachers.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Most children make very good progress in numeracy and mathematics as they move through the school. Children articulate their mathematical thinking very well.

## Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count to 20 and recognise and identify numbers from 0-20. They count on from a given number up to 20. They identify objects that are heavier or lighter. At first level, most children estimate and round numbers to the nearest 10 or 100. They solve problems involving money in a shopping situation and calculate change. They have a solid knowledge of times tables and demonstrate an understanding of the commutative law. They use the correct notation for common fractions and find confidently simple fractions of a whole number. At second level, most children identify the value of digits in numbers to three decimal places. They multiply and divide numbers including decimals by 10,100 and 1,000.

## Shape, position and movement

- Children at early level are developing the language of shape and recognise common two-dimensional shapes. At first level, children have a good understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects, including side, face, edge, vertex, and angle. At second level, children have a good knowledge of different triangles and discuss their properties confidently. They show a good understanding of relationships between three-dimensional objects and nets.

## Information handling

- At early level most children use their knowledge of colour, shape, and size to match and sort items in a variety of ways. At first level, most children collect data to create simple bar graphs and Venn diagrams. At second level children interpret increasingly complex data with accuracy. Further use of digital technology would enhance children's understanding of real-life applications.

## Attainment over time

- Senior leaders track and monitor the progress and attainment of cohorts of children very well and plan strategies to improve progress. These strategies are having a positive impact in raising the attainment of children across all stages over time.
- Senior leaders and teachers have developed highly effective systems to track children's progress in literacy and numeracy. They are now well-placed to extend this to include all other

curriculum areas. This will support them in their ongoing work to highlight gaps in children's learning and inform areas for future development.

- Senior leaders and teachers have deployed Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), funded resources judiciously to accelerate the progress of targeted groups of children. For example, they are embedding resources geared towards developing children's skills in decoding and over-learning. As a result, these are showing signs of improving children's outcomes in focused aspects of children's literacy skills.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Children's achievements within and out with school are celebrated effectively through assemblies, learning journals, in classes and with awards. The pupil Getting it Right for Every Child group, displays achievements in an achievement tree for everyone to see. Children are proud of their successes and share how these develop their confidence and wellbeing.
- Children enjoy regular opportunities to take part in a variety of clubs run by teachers, partners and other children. These include, for example, coding, netball, judo and arts and crafts. Senior leaders and teachers plan a residential trip for children in P7 and visits for all classes out with the school environment. These clubs and trips give children valuable opportunities to develop new skills and transfer their learning to new activities, which they value.
- Senior leaders and teachers are developing the language of skills effectively into children's learning and leadership roles. As a result, children talk confidently about for example, evaluating their own work and the work of their peers. This is a strength of the work of the school. All children in P7 have a leadership role which includes mini management, parental engagement team and Eco Warriors. A few children across the school take part in the pupil council, class ambassador roles and buddies. Senior leaders have recently begun to track children's participation in clubs and leadership roles. As planned, they should now link this to skills development. This will enable children to celebrate and explain how they are becoming successful, confident, exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the school. This will also allow senior leaders to ensure all children have a wide range of opportunities to expand their learning experiences beyond the classroom.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff share a sound understanding of the socio-economic and cultural contexts of families. They actively seek to remove any barriers to engagement at school. The progress made by identified groups of children who may be facing barriers in their learning is tracked systematically. Staff are deployed effectively to support targeted groups and the impact of interventions is measured carefully. A concise plan for the use of PEF is in place. PEF is used for additional staffing to support identified children to improve their attendance and engagement. Staff can demonstrate improved attendance and engagement and the positive impact this is having on closing the attainment gap for these targeted children. Moving forward, the headteacher should consult and involve parents in PEF planning.



## Other relevant evidence

- The school has a well-resourced library. Children access books from well-stocked resources regularly. Staff are commendably improving the availability of ethnically diverse readers for children to access.
- Children across the school receive their entitlement to at least two hours of high quality physical education each week.

## 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.