Summarised inspection findings

Eday Primary School and Nursery Class

Orkney Islands Council

10 December 2019

Key contextual information

Eday Primary School is located on the small island of Eday in Orkney. It has a small nursery class within the school and a multi-stage composite class for primary aged children. The school roll is eight children. The school has close links with Sanday Community School and supports a pilot arrangement for secondary aged children on shared placements between the two schools.

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 recently appointed headteacher has been in post for six months. He teaches the multi-stage composite class of primary aged children and part-time shared placements for any secondary aged children living on Eday. He is supported well in the nursery setting by a lead early learning and childcare practitioner. The headteacher is proud to be associated with the island and aims to provide continuity to the school. His appointment to the post of headteacher is having a positive impact on children's experiences. The school has had a number of headteachers for short periods over a prolonged period of time. As a result, the new headteacher now needs to take structured and planned action to improve the school's weaknesses.

- The headteacher has devised an appropriate three year improvement plan and vision for improvement. It is important that this is shared with parents and partners to define what the school community wants to achieve overall for children.

- The headteacher is building links with the local community and parents successfully. Further involvement will help ensure they are clear about the school's improvement priorities. He correctly plans to involve them in revising the school's vision, values and aims and to include these in the recently completed school improvement plan. The school does not yet have robust approaches to self-evaluation. The headteacher has identified this as an important priority to improve outcomes for children and the overall quality of the school's work. The headteacher should develop systematic approaches to monitor how well children are progressing in their learning as high priority.

- The headteacher is committed to developing his professional skills and knowledge of current good practice in primary schools. He works closely with the education authority's Service Improvement Officer, who has provided continuity for the school during recent years, with regular changes in staffing. The education authority should ensure professional learning and collaboration with other schools is supported well and achieved. There are promising signs that collaborative working with other experienced teachers will offer appropriate mentoring and valued professional development. The headteacher is open to career-long professional learning and opportunities to develop his leadership skills.

■ There are important weaknesses in the school's systems and approaches to assessment, tracking of children's progress and monitoring attainment over time. The school, supported by the local authority, should take forward the aspects for improvement outlined in this summary of inspection findings. The school needs more time to evidence the positive impact leadership of change is having on outcomes for children.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	weak

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

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

- The headteacher and staff are taking promising steps to provide children with interesting learning opportunities that encourage them to be actively involved in their learning. Staff work alongside one another to provide support for children in their learning. This allows children to learn in small groups and individually. Teaching approaches are showing early signs of children becoming more skilled as independent learners.

- Most children are developing skills in the use of digital technologies to support their learning. There is scope to introduce children to a widening range of learning through digital technologies and for teaching to be enhanced through its increased use. Children are beginning to identify key aspects of their learning that they share with parents through digital software. This should be evaluated and developed further to motivate children and to help assess their progress.

- The headteacher is creating a learning environment where children feel safe and want to take increased responsibilities. Children are developing skills to learn together and support one another. There is scope for them to develop skills of cooperation and to listen to one another more carefully when completing group tasks. Individualised learning programmes will help engage children in more challenging activities matched well to their learning needs.

- The school has a variety of formats for teaching plans which are updated regularly. The plans make some links to resources and programmes for individual children and describe the learning to be covered. There is scope for the headteacher to streamline planning, to make progression in skills clear, and avoid systems becoming unnecessarily bureaucratic.

- The school is at an early stage of gathering and using assessment information. It is important to develop a framework of assessment to make improved links with children's next steps in learning. The school should consider how to make planning more directly linked to children's needs, progress and achievements. Individualised programmes based on children's prior learning, with clearly defined targets will make learning more meaningful for children. This approach will also help with monitoring and tracking to ensure all children make appropriate progress in their learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ The school is developing its curriculum to ensure children are more active in their learning. The headteacher should take forward his plans to refresh the school's vision, values and aims and ensure a common understanding of what the school wants to achieve through its curriculum and unique context.

■ The school is at an early phase of streamlining planning. Staff should refresh the seven year overview for interdisciplinary learning on an ongoing basis, to ensure it continually takes full account of children's interests. This will help ensure children build progressively on their skills and knowledge through a cohesive curriculum. The design principles are evident through children's enjoyment and the relevance of their learning. However, there is headroom to improve personalisation and choice and increase challenge in learning. Children need to develop skills in applying their learning across the curriculum. The school should continue to build on the four contexts and capacities for learning through defining the curriculum rationale.

■ Interdisciplinary learning should enable children to apply their literacy and numeracy skills to new contexts.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

■ The headteacher is developing positive relationships with parents and the community. He is introducing ways for children to share their learning with parents. Parents appreciate the opportunity to use an online application where the school shares photographs and examples of children's work. Whilst this is at the early stage of development, parents recognise its potential to help them be involved more in their children's learning.

■ Parents value the headteacher's welcoming leadership style and open door policy. They talk positively of the headteacher's listening approach, as he develops an understanding of families and the local community in the island's context. As a result, parents are confident that the headteacher is beginning to respond to children's individual styles of learning.

■ Commendably, parents share their skills with children through an afterschool club. The school is keen to support parents further so that they can offer their skills and knowledge as the school moves forward with it improvement agenda.

■ Parents appreciate the support the headteacher provides for shared placements. The education authority plans to support shared placements at the school through virtual learning and e-learning opportunities. With the support of the education authority, the headteacher should regularly review the effectiveness of shared placements in meeting the needs of children and young people.

■ The headteacher is aware of the need to be creative when engaging families to ensure everyone is enabled to contribute to decisions. The school's improvement plan identifies ways in which the headteacher plans to engage parents in evaluating the work of the school. As the school moves these plans forward, it will be important to ensure that parents feel their views are taken into account when planning the curriculum. The school is committed to improving opportunities for parents to support learning across the primary stages. The conveniently located community room could provide the school with a place to develop family learning activities. As he moves forward with his plans, the headteacher recognises the need to demonstrate the impact of engagement with parents, through improved outcomes for learners.

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	weak

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 school is welcoming and inclusive to all children and their families.

- The school has very recently introduced the wellbeing indicators to develop children's understanding of wellbeing and what these mean for them. This is at a very early stage and children are not yet articulating their understanding well-enough. They know how to keep safe while at school and when using the internet. They have a growing understanding of the importance of fitness and healthy eating. The school should take forward its plans to develop nurturing approaches and the health and wellbeing curriculum.

- The headteacher is aware of the need to be well-informed through attendance at professional training in relation to safeguarding. He is aware of the education authority's guidance and child protection protocols. The education authority must ensure that the headteacher is fully supported to attend training that relates to his role and statutory responsibilities. This will enable the headteacher to take appropriate actions with confidence when necessary.

- The headteacher has identified the need to develop a nurturing approach to learning. He plans to take forward aspects of nurture to build children's resilience and confidence. In doing so, the school should consider how it strengthens its approach to supporting children to understand their emotions and the impact that this can have on others. By strengthening newly established informal daily check-ins and check-outs, children will be supported to manage transitions between activities and into and out of class.

- The school is beginning to identify those children who require additional support in their learning. The headteacher should develop strategies to support individual children in their learning. He should take forward the development of personal learning plans. This will help support all children to be more aware of personal short-term learning targets and the progress they are making. The headteacher should evaluate learners' progress towards their personal learning plan targets at key milestones. It would be helpful for the headteacher, with the support of the education authority, to have opportunities to build his confidence in understanding National Benchmarks and expected standards through moderation opportunities with other schools.

- As planned, staff should continue to develop children's understanding of equality and diversity to ensure this is fully reflective of 21st century Scotland, as well as the context of the school. The multi-stage composite class leads to children learning together and learning from one another. The school's curriculum has appropriate focus on learning about other world religions and beliefs. The headteacher encourages children to be tolerant and understanding of one another's needs. It would be helpful to develop children's responsibilities and rights through rights respecting school approaches. This will help empower them in decision making and developing their empathy further.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	weak

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

■ Overall, levels of attainment in literacy and English, numeracy and mathematics are weak. Most children at first and second levels are not making sufficient progress or achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence levels. Curriculum pathways, planning for learning and approaches to assessment need to ensure children do not have gaps in their learning.

■ The headteacher is beginning to analyse data from standardised tests to identify gaps in children's learning and skills. He plans to provide appropriately resourced interventions to address children's needs and improve their learning outcomes. It is too early to fully evaluate the impact of such approaches. The headteacher should ensure that he identifies and gathers the necessary information which will allow him to evaluate their success effectively. In moving forward, the school should use the National Benchmarks, supported by a range assessments, to assess progress and help in identifying children requiring additional support.

Listening and talking
■ Overall, attainment in listening and talking is satisfactory. By the end of second level, children are achieving appropriate skills in talking. At the early level, children give brief responses when asked questions and need to develop confidence to articulate ideas more fully. At first and second levels, most children talk about their interests and know what they want to learn about. Across the school, most children do not listen to one another sufficiently well and are not skilled enough in taking turns. The school recognises the need to develop children's skills in listening and talking.

Reading
■ Overall, attainment in reading is weak. At the early level, children recognise a growing range of initial sounds. They are beginning to apply their phonological awareness to attempt new words. At first level, most children are not progressing well enough in their reading skills. By the end of second level, children are encouraged to lead reading with younger children. However, there is much headroom to improve children's reading skills overall. Across the school, children now need to be reading a wide variety of texts that are well-matched to their skills and progress.

Writing
■ Overall, attainment in writing is weak. The teaching of writing requires an increased focus to ensure improvement across all levels. Children are beginning to see the need to improve presentation and handwriting. At early level, children's skills in the formation of letters are developing and their confidence to copy a simple sentence is growing. At first level, too few children produce continuous pieces of good quality writing. By second level, children have a knowledge of punctuation, but do not apply this consistently well in their writing. Overall, digital technologies could be used more regularly support children in their writing. Feedback should be developed further so that children know what they need to do to improve. Staff now need to

provide a broader range of experiences to ensure children are skilled in writing across wider range of genre.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, attainment in numeracy is weak. Too few children are making sufficient progress in their learning. By second level, children are insufficiently skilled across the mathematics and numeracy curriculum and applying these to other curriculum areas. Teachers should continue to develop appropriate breadth of experiences to develop skills progressively.

Number money and measurement

■ At early level, children count forwards up to 20 and count on from numbers within ten with confidence. They link daily routines and personal events to time sequences. At first and second levels, the majority of children solve addition and subtraction problems with two digit numbers. The majority of children apply strategies to simple multiplication and division calculations. Across the school, children would benefit from increased opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in a variety of contexts focusing on developing strategies to make accurate calculations.

Shape position and movement

■ At early level, children recognise common 2D shapes and 3D objects. Children need to continue to develop mathematical language related to position and movement.

Information handling

■ Across the school, children would benefit from increased opportunities to use their information handling skills across the curriculum. The increased use of digital technologies will support this. At first and second levels, children are not sufficiently skilled in using a variety of different methods to display data from surveys.

Attainment over time

■ In recent years, the school has had several changes in leadership and therefore no consistency in gathering information to inform how well children are progressing. Moderation activities, supported by the education authority, will help raise staffs' expectations and should be taken forward as planned.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

■ Children are happy at school and speak very enthusiastically about the after-school club where they play games and learn new skills such as cycling. The school provides opportunities for children to engage in sporting activities such as tag rugby, karate and swimming. Teachers should develop a system for tracking achievements and include achievements from out with school.

■ The headteacher develops children's leadership skills through the pupil council. Staff should now focus on increasing opportunities for children to continue to develop their leadership skills and take increased responsibilities for themselves and one another. Older children enjoy supporting nursery children when tending to vegetables they are growing in the school poly-tunnel.

■ Children enjoy exploring and singing traditional songs and music. They are beginning to understand rhythm as they clap out simple musical patterns. Children are beginning to build their musical confidence as they learn to play a brass instrument.

Equity

■ Staff have a developing understanding of the varied barriers children have to learning. It is important that the school identifies and provides interventions to address the individual needs of all children. The headteacher should now ensure that these interventions are evaluated to measure the impact for children over time.

- Arrangements to support learners and their families
- Collaborative planning and delivery
- Continuity and progression in learning

■ The school works effectively with children and their families to ensure that children settle quickly. Transitions from the nursery are planned well in advance of children moving to school. The nursery class is situated conveniently adjacent to the primary class and children integrate between the two rooms to aid transition. Parents talk positively about the opportunities they have to visit the school informally as part of the transition process. They are fully involved in supporting their child to move from nursery to primary school. Consideration is given to overcome any anxieties from children and their families. Children who start at the school part way through the session, engage in their learning quickly and begin to build positive relationships with staff and their peers.

■ The headteacher seeks information from previous schools prior to new children attending the school. The quality of the information received can be inconsistent and at times lacks key data, such as attendance and attainment levels. This leads to the headteacher having to spend considerable time determining children's progress and identifying gaps in their learning. The school needs to pursue its links with partners, schools and the education authority to ensure high quality information is provided prior to any placement at the school.

■ A few children are challenged, as part of a multi-stage composite class, to remain on task or to move from one task to another. Staff should consider a variety of teaching approaches to help a few children to remain on task as they transition from one task to another. This should include providing children with appropriate verbal and visual supports to aid transition.

■ Progression pathways across the curriculum would support the headteacher in planning for appropriate pace through Curriculum for Excellence levels as children move through the school.

■ The school takes account of parents' views as to what makes for an effective transition for their child to Sanday Community School and Kirkwall Grammar School. This includes enhanced transition arrangements for those children with additional support needs and shared placements. Parents should continue to be supported in making informed choices about the next phase of learning for their child, so that learners continue to make progress.

■ The headteacher is at the early stage of building effective partnerships with other agencies and schools to support well-timed transition plans. With the support of the education authority, the headteacher needs to continue to make appropriate arrangements to meet and work closely with other agencies and schools, so that important information about learners' progress can be shared in a timely manner. This will ensure that there is continuity of planning for children at times of transition, including those with additional support needs.

■ There is scope for the headteacher to continue to work with other partner schools to plan collaboratively to meet the needs of individual children. Pupil learning plans will support this partnership approach. As a result, children will be better prepared to identify their strengths and next steps in learning as they move from one school to another.

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.