

Summarised inspection findings

Greenwards Primary School

Moray Council

27 August 2024

Key contextual information

Greenwards Primary School serves the southwest area of Elgin. There is an enhanced provision in the school for children with complex needs. At the time of the inspection, there were 335 children on the school roll, across 13 classes and the enhanced provision.

Around one half of children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation decile eight. Just under one half of children live in decile four, with the remainder living across deciles one to 10.

There has been significant change within the leadership and staff teams this academic year. At the time of the inspection, the two experienced depute headteachers were sharing the acting headteacher role on a temporary basis. An education officer from the council is supporting the acting headteachers a few days a week. A significant minority of substantive class teachers were on maternity leave and temporary teachers were in place.

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

- Across the school, staff foster positive and nurturing relationships with children. Teachers interact positively with learners, showing care and demonstrating their knowledge of children and their needs well. This supports a calm and purposeful learning environment. Children are confident, polite and friendly. They are developing their awareness of the importance of children's rights. A majority of children in the upper stages speak confidently about their rights and how these are relevant to their lives at school and beyond. Most staff encourage children to understand how rights affect their interactions with others.
- Most children say that their teachers help them to understand the progress that they are making. All children use online learning logs regularly to reflect on activities they have undertaken and the progress that they have made. In a few lessons, teachers use formative assessment strategies well as part of day-to-day lessons to support children's understanding and progress. For example, older children are skilled in peer assessment when undertaking extended writing. In these lessons, children describe confidently what they have learned and the steps they need to take to improve. As planned, senior leaders should support teachers to share this effective practice more widely across the school. In most lessons, teachers provide whole class verbal feedback to children. Teachers would benefit from further professional learning in formative assessment to improve the quality of feedback that children receive on their learning and progress.
- In most lessons, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear. A majority of teachers recap on prior learning well and link new activities to what children have already learned. In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning and what success looks like with children. A few teachers co-create steps to success well with children. In these lessons, children reflect

confidently on the progress they are making. This effective practice should be shared widely and embedded across the school. This has the potential to develop further the confidence of all children in understanding how well they are doing and their next steps in learning.

- In most lessons, teachers set clear expectations and have established effective routines that support children to be settled and engaged in class activities. Most children are motivated and engage well in their learning. They work well independently, in pairs and in groups. In a few lessons, teachers encourage children to lead aspects of their learning which provides meaningful opportunities for personalisation and choice. A majority of children require higher levels of challenge in their work to ensure they accelerate their progress. A few children become disengaged when activities lack challenge. Moving forward, teachers should continue to work with senior leaders to ensure that all children experience the correct level of challenge and support, consistent with their abilities.
- Across the school, teachers use of questioning is inconsistent. A few teachers use a range of effective questioning techniques to extend children's thinking. However, in a majority of lessons, teachers use basic questioning and invite children to volunteer to answer questions. This results in a minority of children not participating fully in their learning. Teachers need to use a wider range of questioning techniques, including higher order questioning to identify children who need further support or challenge during lessons.
- Recently, teachers participated in a local authority approach supporting professional enquiry. This is beginning to help teachers to understand how they can apply professional learning to improving classroom practice. As planned, senior leaders should now work with all members of the school community to establish an agreed framework for learning, teaching and assessment. Working together, staff should establish agreed approaches towards developing greater consistency in high-quality learning, teaching and assessment.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to support teaching in most classes. In a few lessons, children make effective use of digital technology to support and enhance their learning. For example, children use digital technologies to reinforce their numeracy learning, to research topics and to create written texts. Younger children use tablets to take photos of their own creations during their play and learning. All teachers should continue to enhance their use of digital technology to offer children rich and creative contexts for learning.
- Children have regular opportunities to engage in effective play-based learning through 'Discovery Time' in P1 and 'Exploration Time' in P2, P3 and P4. Teachers use national guidance very well to provide a wide range of play-based activities that support children's literacy, numeracy, communication and social skills. They plan a well-judged blend of adult-directed and child-initiated activities to motivate and challenge children and promote deeper learning. As a result, children are growing in independence, becoming more confident and engage in meaningful play for sustained periods.
- All teachers use whole school progression pathways and local authority planning documents when planning learning and teaching. A few teachers plan together regularly which supports greater consistency across certain classes and stages. They also plan for opportunities for children at the same stage to learn together. Teachers should ensure that planning for assessment is integral to planning for effective learning and teaching. This has the potential to improve teachers' confidence in providing regular and meaningful feedback to children on the progress that they are making. A next step is for teachers to continue to develop a better understanding of planning learning across all curriculum areas. This will help to ensure that children experience more consistency, breadth and depth in their learning.

- Senior leaders meet with teachers regularly to discuss children's progress and attainment. Teachers need to now become more confident in using data and national Benchmarks to evidence children's progress. Senior leaders recognise that professional judgments about the progress children are making need to be more robust. They should continue to ensure that all teachers have regular opportunities to participate in moderation activities in school and with local authority colleagues. This will support teachers to identify gaps in children's learning and put in place interventions to better support progress.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy is good and attainment in numeracy is satisfactory. Most children are on track to achieve national standards in literacy. The majority of children are on track to achieve national standards in numeracy. A few children at second level exceed national standards in numeracy. Children who need additional support with their learning are making appropriate progress towards the targets within their individual plans. A significant minority of children across the school are capable of achieving more in their learning, particularly in numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading, writing, listening and talking. In recent years, staff have worked very well together to introduce new approaches to teaching reading and writing. As a result, attainment in reading and writing has improved. Across early, first and second levels, children have regular opportunities to write, including at length, across a range of genres. They enjoy talking about their writing, developing ideas together and refining their writing skills.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children are making good progress in listening and talking. Most children are articulate and can communicate effectively with others. At early level, most children listen well to instructions. They ask and answer questions about texts well to show understanding. Across first level, most children share their views confidently when working with adults, in pairs and small groups. A minority need more support to listen well when others are speaking and not talk over one another. By the end of second level, most children are growing in confidence when speaking to peers and adults across a range of situations. They should be supported to develop their use of tone and volume to engage listeners in a variety of situations.

Reading

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. Whole school opportunities to access the library ensure children engage regularly with reading. At early level, most children blend sounds to create and read simple words confidently. They enjoy listening to a variety of stories and texts and answer simple questions. By the end of first level, most children read familiar texts with growing fluency and expression and can identify the main idea. At second level, most children select and use an increased range of strategies when reading. They read with fluency, expression and use appropriate pace and tone. Children ask and answer questions well which demonstrates their understanding of a range of texts. Children should be supported to continue to develop their skills in identifying and discussing writers' styles and other features of high-quality texts.

Writing

- The staff team have been working together to develop consistent approaches to writing across the school. This is having a positive impact on attainment. Children working towards early level form lowercase letters legibly and make attempts to spell familiar words correctly. Most use capital letters and full stops accurately in their writing. The majority of children working towards first level spell most commonly used words correctly. They are able to create texts for different purposes through a variety of genres. At second level, most children attempt to engage the reader through use of vocabulary well, appropriate to the genre they are writing in. Across the school, children have regular opportunities to personalise their writing. They would now benefit from having more opportunities to write in real-life contexts.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children are on track to achieve national expectations in numeracy and mathematics and are making satisfactory progress. At second level, a few children exceed national expectations. Across the school, a significant minority of children are capable of learning at a faster pace in order to make better progress.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, the majority of children identify, recognise and order numbers up to 10. They use one-to-one correspondence with confidence to count a given number of objects. Through play experiences, they investigate aspects of numeracy, such as volume and money, which helps them understand these areas in context. At first level, the majority of children choose different strategies when adding and subtracting and justify their choice well. A minority of children at first level need more support to choose an appropriate strategy and to work through examples methodically. By P7, most children have a sound knowledge of financial education. They understand the difference between credit and debit cards, and have investigated budgeting, calculating interest and why credit scoring is important. Most demonstrate well their understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages and can convert one to another. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular practice to apply their numeracy skills to real-life, relevant and meaningful contexts.

Shape, position and movement

- At early and first levels, the majority of children name and discuss features of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects successfully. By P7, the majority of children at second level can identify a range of angles and describe the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At early level, most children understand and use the language of position. At first and second levels, the majority of children would benefit from more support in learning about compass points and co-ordinates.

Information handling

- At early level, children ask simple questions and create a bar chart with the information they gather. Children interpret the bar graph correctly to identify the most and least popular choices. At first and second levels, most children can describe how they collect and display data effectively, using tally marks and labelled bar graphs. By P7, most children can identify a range of diagrams, graphs and charts. Across the school, children would benefit from more opportunities to use digital technologies to display the data they gather.

Attainment over time

- Most children are making good progress over time in literacy and satisfactory progress in numeracy. Senior leaders use an established tracking system to track children's attainment over time. Senior leaders are confident that the data staff gather to track attainment in literacy and English over time is accurate. They have rightly identified that attainment data in numeracy is less robust, particularly at the early and first levels. Staff have correctly identified the need to

continue to raise attainment of all, particularly in numeracy. Senior leaders have also identified the need to accelerate progress in all curricular areas for learners.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their achievements and enjoy celebrating their successes through assemblies and wall displays. Children earn house points for demonstrating behaviours that reflect positively the school values of pride, respect and diligence. Children are also rewarded for demonstrating skills for life and work. Children's house points are tallied and used to award the coveted annual house trophy. Children in the upper stages also earn badges when they achieve milestone house point totals. As a result, children are rewarded for showing care and compassion for others and for demonstrating pride in their work. All children regularly participate in family events where they share aspects of their learning. Children enjoy these opportunities to demonstrate their creativity to a wide audience.
- A majority of children participate in a range of after-school clubs, activities and events offered by staff. This helps them to develop new skills and increase confidence. Children speak enthusiastically about activities relating to sport, performing arts and digital skills, such as coding club. They recognise how taking part in netball and football helps them to be healthy and active. Children who participate in the choir and glee club showcase their well-developed performance skills. Senior leaders are at the early stages of tracking children's participation in achievements, both in and outwith school. They identified through a recent questionnaire that a minority of children across the school do not participate readily in achievement opportunities. They have listened to children's ideas for new clubs which could be introduced. As planned, staff should continue to work with these children to ensure they all benefit from increased opportunities to achieve success.

Equity for all learners

- The school's allocation of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) is used to provide universal and targeted interventions with the aim of raising attainment in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. The school is not yet able to identify how well PEF is accelerating closing the poverty related attainment gap. As planned, senior leaders should evaluate more closely the impact of interventions on the attainment of individuals and cohorts of children. This will enable staff to measure the effectiveness of their interventions in closing the poverty related attainment gap.
- Overall, school attendance is above the national average. Senior leaders have improved their approaches to tracking the attendance of children, in particular using data to identify children who need further support to improve their attendance or punctuality. Senior leaders have used PEF to provide additional teaching staff to work with children to support improvements in attendance levels. They identify that a next step is to consider how PEF can be used in a more targeted way, and to develop systems to measure the impact of such interventions more effectively.

Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

The Green Area is a special unit sited within the main building of the school. This supports eight children with a range of severe and complex on needs on a full-time basis. All children spend at least some time over the course of a week in mainstream classes alongside their peers.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

- All staff establish positive and supportive relationships with all children. They show high levels of compassion at all times throughout the day. Teachers and support assistants have a well developed understanding of each individual child's additional support needs. This supports the caring ethos across the unit. Staff's understanding of each child supports them to provide activities which are matched well to children's needs and interests. As a result, children engage well in their learning. Children enjoy their learning and express this frequently through smiling or laughing. In incidences when children become dysregulated staff are adept at using a range of strategies to reengage them in their learning.
- Staff provide children with opportunities to express choice, when appropriate. For example, when choosing what to eat for lunch or what activities they would like to do more. Staff use visual symbols well to help children to express their choices or opinions. Staff should continue to develop how they use a range of approaches to ensure children are afforded opportunities to make choices.
- Staff use a range of approaches and environments well to promote children's interest in their learning. They use practical materials and objects of reference to help children learn using real life objects, for example, using seaweed to explain about life in the sea. Staff use outdoor learning spaces well to support children to experience free play in a safe environment. Staff use the school's sensory and soft play rooms to help children develop their skills in different spaces throughout the school. Children's use of digital technologies is limited to mostly viewing videos or presentations on whiteboards. Staff should continue to develop how they use a range of resources, including digital technologies, and spaces to maintain and develop children's interest in their learning.
- Staff communicate well with children using language appropriate to each child's needs. They explain tasks and activities effectively. This supports children to know what they are being asked to do. Staff are developing using signing as a way of supporting how they communicate with children. They should continue to develop their confidence and skills in doing so. This will support children who find this a helpful way to communicate. All staff use visual timetables to ensure children know what they will be doing each day. Staff use 'word boards' to support children to make choices or answer questions. Where appropriate, staff use augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices to help children communicate. Staff should continue to develop how they communicate with children to ensure children understand their learning. Staff use praise well to help children know when they have been successful.
- A range of partners support staff well to have a holistic understanding of each child's abilities. Children's targets, captured in their individualised education programmes (IEPs) focus effectively on each child's barriers to their learning. Staff's ongoing assessment of each child supports them to review children's progress against targets in their IEPs. This helps staff to have a clear understanding of how well children are progressing in their learning. Staff's knowledge and close observation of each child's level of engagement supports them to make adaptations to each child's daily learning plan. Overall, this helps most children to make good progress in their learning.

- Teachers plan children's learning across all curricular areas termly, using a new context for learning each term. They plan daily activities effectively to develop children's progress within curricular areas and to support children to make progress against their targets in their IEPs. Teachers are beginning to track and monitor children's progress more formally through more regularly reviewing children's progress against their targets in their IEPs. Teachers should continue, as planned, to develop further how they track and monitor children's progress against the national Benchmarks.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- The small number of children attending the enhanced provision, and wide variability of children's communication and other support needs, renders comparisons of groups or cohorts invalid. All children are working at pre-early level. Overall, from observations of learning and reviewing children's progress, most children are making good progress in their learning.
- Most children are making good progress in their communication and literacy skills. A few children are developing their skills to express choice using visual cues and AAC aids. A few are developing their early skills in writing letters. A few children can write letters legibly. A few children are developing their speech skills well. They can express their likes and dislikes and use simple words to communicate. A few children can read text. All children need to continue to develop their communication and literacy skills in ways which support them to communicate with others.
- The majority of children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The majority of children can count to 10. A few can count to numbers within 10. A few children can count beyond 10. A few children can identify and name two-dimensional shapes. A few children can identify and name three-dimensional shapes. A minority of children can use 'little' and 'big' to describe the relative size of two shapes. A minority can describe movement, such as stepping forward and back.
- From the evidence available at the time of the inspection, overall children are making good progress over time. This includes evidence of staff developing children's abilities to access their learning by helping children's understanding of English language. Teachers should continue with their plans to develop further their approaches to how they track and monitor children's progress. This includes, gathering a wider range of evidence showing how well children are attaining. This will support teachers to evidence how well children are improving their attainment as they move through the school.
- Children's personal achievements are recognised mostly through children's progress against their targets in their IEPs. Teachers should now consider how children's wider achievements could be recognised and celebrated more widely, for example, through school awards.
- All children in the Green Area experience some time learning in their mainstream classes each day. This is mostly confined to morning registration and choosing daily lunches. Teachers should now consider how children can be included more fully in the life of the school, for example, through being included more in school events and at assemblies.

Other relevant evidence

- All children in P7 have meaningful leadership roles, supporting the work of the school. These include helpful roles such as eco council, newsletter team, digital leaders and garden gangs. A minority of children act as positive role models, such as the WOW team who encourage younger peers to play successfully during breaks and help them to resolve any disagreements. A few children act as house captains or serve on the pupil council. They gather the views of their class and use these to inform improvements in the school. Children in P7 talk confidently about the skills for learning, life and work they develop through leadership roles. Going forward, senior leaders should consider how more children across the school can be offered leadership roles.
- All children benefit from participating in two hours of physical education each week.
- The school is meeting the national 1+2 initiative for teaching modern languages. Children across the school learn German, and children at the upper stages also learn French.
- Senior leaders have plans in place to more meaningfully involve parents and children in PEF spending plans.

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.