

Summarised inspection findings

Newmill Primary School

Moray Council

SEED No: 5207924

28 November 2017

Key contextual information

Newmill Primary School serves the village of Newmill and the surrounding rural area. A clock tower stands in the centre of the village and is featured on the school uniform. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year and is supported by a principal teacher, in post for the same length of time. The school role is 73. Children are taught in 3 multi-composite classes (P1-3; P3-6 and P5-7). The headteacher leads Newmill Primary School as part of a shared headship with Botriphnie Primary School. The schools came together as a new pairing at the time of the headteacher's appointment. The headteacher describes strong working across the cluster through their Associated School Group and other partner school. The village playgroup works in close partnership with the school for children starting P1. Children at the end of P7 transfer to Keith Grammar School.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement

good

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasizes the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- Staff know the children and families well and provide a caring environment. All children and staff at Newmill Primary are included and almost all are effectively involved in the process of self-evaluation which is leading to school improvement. There are clear priorities identified through the improvement process and understood by children and staff.
- The headteacher effectively models approaches for learning, teaching and assessment and shares good practice with children and staff. She is creating a whole school learning community approach to making improvements which works. This is beginning to impact positively on all children's learning at classroom level. Children are developing skills for learning, life and work through well planned weekly clubs and councils. All children are becoming effective contributors and their work is leading to school improvement. Effective use of floor books helps children to record and evaluate their on-going improvement work. Parents are encouraged to add their views to the floor books.
- Almost all children talk confidently about the school values and vision and can articulate what it means for them as learners. 'The Wall' of achievement effectively connects the vision and values to learning across all areas of the curriculum. 'The Wall' is supporting all children to understand about the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)*; the skills they are developing and also captures their on-going successes. In conversation and in reflection jotters children show that they understand what the priorities for improvement are and how they affect them as learners, such as self-evaluating their progress and how well they are developing a growth mind-set. Staff should now consider how this can be used to further raise attainment for all children.
- Partnership with parents and the Newmill community is strong and there is a real sense of pride in the school and children's successes and achievements. Parents and partners are very supportive and feel involved with the school and how it is working to improve. There is an active Parent Council. The school has a range of ways to communicate with parents and gather their views which are acted on. For example, involvement in improving the playground, the website and making links with local businesses such as a local supermarket in support of food banks. The running club is run by parents and the after school club, to which the majority of children attend, is supported by parents, S1-3 young people, partners and staff. They all work together effectively to offer a wide range of activities. Parents appreciate the reflection jotters and find them very helpful in knowing how well their children are progressing. The school should continue to engage parents in their children's learning.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for improvement. She successfully engages all staff in collaborative working. Staff are committed to and engage well with the learning community. The headteacher works closely with other headteachers and colleagues supporting and challenging appropriately, to build capacity for further improving the school. Staff are involved in sharing practice within and beyond the school through the Associated Schools Group (ASG) and four other partner schools. These schools come together as a professional learning community giving opportunities for sharing good practice and effective moderation. This is enabling the school to embed their vision and values. They are beginning to develop a shared understanding for learning, teaching and assessment. This is supporting staff in identifying children's progress in achieving a level.
- The headteacher has conducted professional review and development meetings with all staff connecting the needs of the school with their own personal professional learning needs. The headteacher shares relevant professional learning and reading with staff and children regularly. Expectations are shared through assemblies with children and all staff. This is leading to a collective understanding and is beginning to develop aspirational thinking about school improvement.
- Staff are at the early stages of effectively using assessment data and information to inform judgements and priorities for improvement. The school should ensure that continuous and robust self-evaluation supports the improvement agenda involving all stakeholders.
- The school is beginning to monitor and track children's progress more effectively. Staff are developing children's learning pathways and the school is planning to use the Moray tracking system. The collegiate working on moderation; sharing good practice and self-evaluation is beginning to impact on learning and teaching, achievement and wellbeing of children. There is scope to use assessment information more rigorously to measure children's progress ensuring all children make appropriately paced progress, building on prior learning and in achieving Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- The school has appropriately identified a number of next steps for improvement. Continue to develop these plans focusing on raising attainment and achievement for all children. Under the strong leadership of the headteacher we are confident that the school has the capacity for continuous improvement.

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

3.2 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

- The school recognises that it is in the early stages of engaging with the national guidance designed to support professional judgement in relation to the achievement of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. As a result, attainment data for literacy and numeracy is not yet based on robust or reliable assessment. Continuing staff involvement in moderation activities with the school's Associated School's Group (ASG) and four other partner schools will help strengthen the reliability and robustness of attainment data. In addition, the training currently being undertaken by the principal teacher as a Quality Assurance and Moderation Support Officer (QAMSO) will support the school's approaches to assessment and moderation better reflect national guidance.
- Based on a range of assessment data, including standardised assessments, published materials and participation in moderation activities, the school predicts that most of P1 and P4 will achieve their respective early and first level in both literacy and numeracy by the end of this school session. At P7, the school predicts that the majority of children will achieve second level in both literacy and numeracy. A range of inspection activities including classroom observations, sampling work and sample groups indicates that these are ambitious predictions. Significant work will need to be undertaken with pupils, particularly in relation to numeracy at first and second level, if these targets are to be achieved.
- There is scope to increase the level of expectation and increase the pace of learning across the school. The majority of children responding to pre-inspection questionnaires identified that the level of challenge in their work could be improved. In lessons observed, the needs of the range of children within each multi-stage composite class are not being fully addressed. We have asked the school to review its approaches to differentiation to ensure that opportunities to raise attainment for all are met.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Listening and talking is strongest in the upper school with most children making good progress at second level. At early and first level, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in listening and talking.
- **Listening and talking:** Most children throughout the school are able to identify and explain the specific skills associated with effective listening and talking. For example, they understand the need to take turns and the importance of eye-contact when talking. The application of these skills is strongest in the upper primary. At first level most children can

perform a given text with associated actions in preparation for story writing. They can discuss the development of a story character with a partner in an appropriate manner. These skills should now be developed in larger group settings, particularly the ability to take turns. By P7, most children can debate issues by contributing their opinions and their justification for them.

At times excessive noise levels within the large classroom area where two of the three classes are based impacts on learning activities. We have asked staff to consider how this can be improved. For example, through their planning of learning activities and developing children's skills in selecting the most appropriate level of voice for specific tasks. We suggest involving the children in finding solutions to this.

- **Reading:** All children within the first and second level sample groups are able to talk about a range of authors, however their breadth of knowledge is limited. At second level the boys and girls had different texts. Care should be taken to ensure gender stereotypes are not reinforced through book selection. When asked to read aloud, all did so with fluency and expression.
- Having identified the need to increase children's reading for enjoyment, the school engaged with the 'First Minister's Reading Challenge'. All children within the first and second level sample groups report that this had resulted in them reading an increased number of books. They are unable to quantify how many books they had read as part of the challenge. More effective tracking of children's engagement with this challenge will help the school measure the impact of this on children's attainment. Children have been inspired by opportunities to meet real authors and illustrators as part of this work.
- **Writing:** The introduction of strategies to support the development of story writing has engaged children in the writing process. The majority of children in sample groups said this approach had increased their enjoyment of writing, particularly at first and second level.
- Children across the school can write using a range of genres. This includes personal recount, instructions and persuasive writing. The use of clear structures is evident in children's writing. There is scope to provide children with more opportunities to demonstrate their ability to write independently. This will enable staff to assess their progress, particularly children's ability to transfer their learning across the curriculum.
- The use of 'Reflection Jotters' is providing children throughout the school with frequent opportunities to write. Almost all children are using vocabulary which describes themselves as a learner. Children are beginning to transfer the skills of writing into their reflection work.
- Throughout the school there is scope to improve the standard of presentation of work. At early and first level a significant number of children demonstrate poor pencil control and a lack of correct letter formation. In upper primary, most children can use digital technology effectively to present their writing. These pieces include a range of techniques designed to engage the reader.
- There is scope to improve the standard of spelling across the school, particularly at early and first levels. The strategies currently being used to develop spelling, including homework, should be revisited, to ensure that the consistency of spelling is increased.

Other languages

- The school's commitment to introducing French as a 1+2 language last session has resulted in most children being motivated and confident when speaking French. Children demonstrate a good range of vocabulary and can hold a conversation with a partner. In the upper stages children can read simple menus and phrases written in French. Children speak with pride about their ability to host a French café for parents, using their French vocabulary to serve them. Commendably, the school has involved the local playgroup in this initiative, resulting in improved transitions and enhancing the learning of French at early level.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school the pace of learning is too slow. At times children at different year groups are working on the same tasks and would benefit from more differentiated learning. A few lessons are too teacher led and there are missed opportunities for children to develop their thinking skills.
- **Number:** At early level most children can recognise and form numbers one to ten using a variety of materials. A few children complete practical tasks very easily and would benefit from learning experiences which offer greater challenge. P2 children can add and subtract within 10 and P3 can add and subtract within 20.
- At P4, most children working within first level can accurately round numbers to 10 and a 100 with a few rounding to 1000. They are confident counting in twos and tens. They can match a picture showing a fraction to its notation in a game. Children are at the very early stages of learning about notation and vocabulary associated with fractions. They are not yet able to recognise from a picture that a $\frac{1}{2}$ is equal to $\frac{2}{4}$ or $\frac{3}{6}$. At P5-7 children can multiply by 10, 100 and 1000 and can talk about the strategies they are using. They understand place value for numbers to 10 000 and can partition numbers into thousands, hundreds, tens and ones.
- By P7, the majority of children working within second level are confident in working with large numbers. They can round up or down to 10, 100 and 100 000 including rounding decimal fractions to two places. Children in the second level sample group understand the value of numbers as thousands, hundreds, tens, ones and tenths. They are less confident in working with fractions. They are not yet recognising equivalent fractions or able to convert a fraction to a decimal, such as $\frac{3}{4}$ to 0.75, or a percentage.
- **Money:** Across the early level children complete shopping cards to add and subtract within 10 and within 20 for P3. In a sample group working within first level children are not yet confident in working out simple addition and subtraction of money. In a sample group working within second level a few children can apply their skills in simple calculations adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing money calculations.
- **Measure:** Children in a sample group at first level are not yet able to estimate length or height, a few children talked about measuring in feet. A few children can recognise half past on a clock but are not confident in telling the time. A sample group of children at second level are able to estimate using metres and centimetres such as the length of the table and height of the door. They are able to select appropriate units of measurement to measure distance and different objects. A few children have some idea about measuring area but will

benefit from further work to develop their understanding. The group can talk about litres and millilitres but are not aware that 1000 millilitres equals a litre.

- **Shape, position and movement:** At early and first level children can recognise 2D shapes including circles, squares, rectangles and octagons, with a few children naming pentagons and hexagons. They are aware of some 3D objects such as spheres, cones and pyramids. A sample group working within second level are able to identify and discuss a variety of angles including acute, obtuse, right angle angles and reflex. They show an understanding of the points of a compass and are beginning to understand the connection between angles and bearings.
- **Information Handling:** Children working within first level are developing their knowledge of data handling and can talk about making a chart about birthdays. At the second level children can describe bar and pie charts and how they have used them. A few children are unable to recall learning about information handling.
- **Problem Solving:** Across the school there are opportunities to further develop problem solving approaches to develop the children's higher order thinking skills and their conceptual understanding of mathematics.

Attainment over time in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, children are making satisfactory progress in both literacy and numeracy over time. The schools planned involvement in the Northern Alliance Numeracy Project should help progress levels of attainment in numeracy.
- Although there is some evidence of the school using attainment data to inform interventions for targeted individuals and groups, the school is not yet able to demonstrate the impact of these interventions. The school has just begun to pilot a new tracking system developed by the local authority designed to track and monitor attainment. The implementation of this will enable the school to monitor the progress of all children. For example, those requiring additional support and those facing barriers to learning due to their social-economic circumstances.

Achievement

- The development of growth mind-sets across the school has resulted in a culture where achievements are recognised and shared. This culture is clearly illustrated through a central display known as 'The Wall'. This large display enables the school community to celebrate and share achievements, linking them clearly to the Curriculum for Excellence four capacities, specific skills, overarching themes such as sustainability and children's rights. Almost all children talk with confidence about 'The Wall' and what it represents. Teacher feedback in children's work, and comments in their own reflection jotters, demonstrates the consistency of this approach across the school community. Parent comments within reflection jotters echo the growth mind-set language being used in school. Children and staff strive to '*fill their buckets*' with positive achievements. Children's involvement in the development of the school's vision and values, using the village 'tower' landmark as the inspiration, is enabling children to talk about their increased expectations of themselves. Weekly assemblies, known as 'Tower Time', are used effectively to support the whole school community in recognising and celebrating

achievements. We have asked the staff to build on this very positive start by developing a system to monitor and track children's achievements. This will help identify the development and progression of skills through wider achievement.

- Large floor books are used effectively by staff to track developments within the school and recognise the achievements of groups and individuals. These provide an overview of the development of new initiatives, projects and curricular developments and demonstrate their impact in relation to school improvement. All children are actively involved in the development of the school community through participation in weekly vertical group activities. During this time they all '*work for the school*' to make it better. Children have opportunities to rotate round the groups after each eight week block, ensuring a breadth of opportunity and experience. Children take a pride in what they have achieved. These groups are currently leading the school towards achieving their ECO school silver level, and level one Rights Respecting Schools award in addition to a range of other initiatives. Teachers personalise each child's contribution to these tasks to ensure that personal learning targets are being met and that there are clear links with the development of Curriculum for Excellence's four capacities.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good understanding of the needs of each child and take steps to remove barriers to learning. For example, the introduction of the '*Funday Monday*' after-school club is helping provide homework support, including access to computers.
- The school has a clear plan for using the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This involves working closely with cluster schools improving learning, teaching and assessment to maximise impact on outcomes for children.
- As a result of an unfilled vacancy for the Support for Learning Teacher's post, senior leaders are beginning to develop staff understanding of the local authorities' additional support needs (ASN) framework. This includes the development of individual education plans (IEPs) for identified children. Across the school, 51% of the school roll is identified as having additional support needs. Ensuring that effective planning is in place for children facing barriers to learning will support the school's approaches to promoting equity of success and achievement for all children.

Strengths of the school

- The strong leadership and clear direction provided by the headteacher in developing an effective learning community for all. Staff involvement in the learning community and the success in implementing the shared vision and values. This is beginning to have a positive impact on children's experiences.
- Children who are empowered, committed and active in evaluating and improving their school.
- The supportive relationships between staff and children and the partnerships with all stakeholders. They are working together to improve the learning experiences and outcomes for all children.

Areas for improvement for the school

- Continue to develop effective self-evaluation using robust tracking and monitoring approaches to improve attainment in literacy and numeracy for all children.
- Further improve learning, teaching and assessment. Agree shared expectations to enable all children to make appropriate progress from prior learning, raising their attainment and achievement.

What happens following the end of the inspection?

- We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Moray Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

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.

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