

Summarised inspection findings

Auchterellon Primary School

Aberdeenshire Council

3 October 2023

Key contextual information

Auchterellon primary school is located in the rural town of Ellon, Aberdeenshire. At the time of the inspection the roll was 339. The headteacher has been in post for over two years. She is supported by two deputy headteachers.

Attendance is generally above the national average. Exclusions are generally below the national average.

The pupil equity fund (PEF) allocation this session was £18,375.

In September 2021, 0% of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. The majority (57.7%) of pupils live in the 20% least deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2021 the school reported that 36% of pupils had additional support needs.

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

- At Auchterellon Primary School, the ethos and relationships between staff and children are relaxed and friendly. Children show empathy for one another in class and around the school. Staff and children are beginning to demonstrate well the recently revised school values of creative, aspiring, respectful, resilient and inclusive, in their everyday interactions, and in lessons. This is enhancing a learning environment where outcomes for most children are strong.
- Most children participate well in lessons. Children's enthusiasm and engagement in most lessons are positive. Across classes, learning meets most children's needs. Learning is appropriately challenging in the majority of lessons. Teachers should continue to use flexible ways of looking outwards at national standards and expectations to benchmark what challenging learning and teaching looks like across the curriculum.
- Teachers at early and first levels are beginning to implement aspects of play-based pedagogy. There is a need to ensure that the range of opportunities to learn through play develop children's creativity, problem solving and independence. Staff would benefit from further professional learning and use of the early years national practice guidance, *Realising the Ambition: Being Me* (2020). This will strengthen their understanding of learning through play to ensure progression across early level.
- Senior leaders and teachers are creating increased opportunities for children to contribute effectively to the wider life of the school and develop key skills for life, learning and work. They seek children's views regularly to shape aspects of school improvement. In order to support

this aspect of the school's work, senior leaders have re-established a range of relevant 'pupil voice groups' to feed into aspects of whole school improvement. They should ensure that children are always aware of the impact sharing their views has on whole-school improvement and their learning environment.

- Learning environments around the school are attractive and displays are updated regularly. These celebrate aspects of children's learning and demonstrate the positive impact of children's wider opportunities to lead areas of improvement across the school community. Most teachers maximise the use of learning spaces effectively around the school to promote participation in learning activities. In most classes, instructions are clear and children are aware of the purpose of their learning. A few teachers use questioning skilfully to engage children in their learning. Senior leaders should continue with plans to ensure the skills children are developing through their learning are planned and monitored to show the progress they are making in skills development.
- In most classes, teachers plan effectively to incorporate differentiated approaches to support all children in their learning. This is helping to support children who require additional support in their learning and those who are exceeding expected progress. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to engage in professional dialogue to reach a more consistent understanding of robust differentiation that supports the targeted needs of all children consistently well.
- Most teachers use a variety of robust assessment approaches to allow children to demonstrate progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Currently, all teachers rely on a variety of commercial standardised assessments to build a more robust picture of children's attainment and progress in their learning. Senior leaders are planning well to ensure increased opportunities for teachers to access more regular professional learning opportunities to improve their skill in moderation and judgement of children's achievement of a level. Almost all teachers engage in moderation activities with peer colleagues to benchmark children's assessments against national standards. They need to engage further in moderation activity that is focused on planning for learning, teaching and assessment across curriculum areas and not solely on assessments. This will help to build teachers' confidence and strengthen their judgement of achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels, aligned to national standards.
- In the majority of classes, children receive regular, useful feedback on their progress. Teachers should consider how to enhance approaches to feedback and personalised targets for children more consistently across all stages. This will help children to understand more clearly how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve in each curriculum area. At key milestones, senior leaders and teachers can demonstrate children's progress and attainment in literacy and numeracy using reliable assessment evidence. As a next step, senior leaders and teachers should continue with plans to assess and track children's progress in all curriculum areas. Teachers are beginning to explore different approaches to pupil profiling, sharing learning targets and children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Senior leaders have recently implemented effective systems to monitor children's progress in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Systems to monitor the progress of children who require additional support in their learning are developing well. These are helping to ensure that children who may be at risk of not achieving, continue to make appropriate progress. Teachers are exploring creative ways to engage children in planning the learning and skills they are developing. This is becoming more consistent across the stages and allows children to focus on how to be successful in their learning.

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

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 numeracy across the school is good. Most children's progress in literacy and numeracy from prior levels of attainment, is good.
- Predicted levels of attainment indicate accurately that most children at all stages are on track to achieve expected national levels in literacy and numeracy. A minority of children are achieving beyond expected levels.
- Senior leaders and staff monitor effectively the progress and attainment of children who have additional support needs. Almost all children receiving targeted interventions are making appropriate progress in their learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children's progress and attainment in literacy and English is good.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children take turns and listen to their peers respectfully, when listening and talking in a range of contexts. At first level, most children apply verbal and non-verbal techniques, such as eye contact and body language, when communicating. At second level, most children talk confidently about the purpose of their learning and are enthusiastic to share their successes with others. They contribute appropriately to group discussions. Across the school, children are confident when speaking with their peers. Teachers should plan to develop children's confidence further in talking to an audience in a range of different contexts.

Reading

- At early level, most children engage well when listening to stories. They enjoy contributing to 'story maps' to demonstrate their understanding of a story and to develop their own skills in storytelling. Children show a good awareness of the key features of books. At first level, the majority of children find key information from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. In a few classes, children have planned opportunities to research key information from a range of digital texts. Most children use the contents page, index and headings confidently to help locate information. The majority of children make appropriate notes under given headings to organise information they gather. Children should continue to develop their fluency, understanding and expression when reading. At second level, most children apply a range of skills and strategies to read and understand a wider range of texts. Most children explain their preference for specific types of texts confidently and their reason for this preference. Teachers should continue to encourage children to experience a wider variety of texts for a

range of purposes and genres. This in turn will help to develop their confidence by transferring these skills to their writing for a variety of purposes.

Writing

- Most children at early level use a pencil with increasing control to form fluent letter shapes. The majority of children can write in sentences unsupported with increasing confidence, using accurate punctuation. At first level, the majority of children apply their knowledge of spelling patterns, rules and strategies to spell most words correctly. They create texts regularly for a range of purposes. At second level, the majority of children write for a range of purposes and audiences. They organise ideas and information in a logical order when creating adverts through persuasive writing, using appropriate technical language. At first and second levels, teachers should continue to support children to develop their ability to create texts digitally. Overall, a few children across first and second levels would benefit with further challenge in their writing activities.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Data provided by the school indicates that most children are achieving expected levels of attainment. A few children are working beyond expected levels of attainment. Across all stages, children would benefit from greater opportunities to apply their mathematical skills across a range of real life contexts and making connections across their learning. Teachers should continue to set ambitious targets for all learners at all stages.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, almost all children are able to identify coins to £2. Most can use coin combinations up to 10p to pay for items. Most children demonstrate their understanding of simple measurement language including heavier, lighter, taller and shorter. They are less confident providing examples of when measurement is used in real life contexts. Most children can split a shape into equal parts to illustrate simple fractions.
- At first level, most children use mental agility to find answers to simple calculations. Almost all can use mental agility to calculate the total spend of simple amounts. Almost all children can identify the value of each digit in numbers to 1000. A few pupils demonstrate an understanding of equivalent fractions or how to calculate the area of simple shapes.
- At second level, almost all children can round decimals to the nearest whole number and to one decimal place. A few children can identify a context where negative numbers would be used in real life situations. A few children can identify how to calculate the area of a space using the calculations provided and the minority can record this accurately. The majority of children use their knowledge of decimals and percentages to compare costs, apply discounts and work within a budget.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children can identify and name common two-dimensional shapes and most can use them to continue simple patterns. A minority of children are less confident when describing the features of two-dimensional shapes using appropriate language. Children at first level can name and identify properties of two-dimensional shapes. Less than half of the children can identify properties of named three-dimensional objects and recognise three-dimensional objects in the local environment. A few children are less confident using appropriate vocabulary to describe and calculate measurements within shapes.

Information handling

- At early level, children are able to match and sort items in a variety of ways and can apply counting skills to ask and answer questions. Children are less confident interpreting simple graphs to find answers. Almost all children at first level can use tally marks appropriately to gather information and can identify the types of information that can be displayed through the use of a bar graph. Almost all children at second level can interpret graphs and charts to extract relevant information to analyse, interpret and draw conclusions. Across all levels, children would benefit from opportunities to use a wider variety of data and digital technologies in this area. This would allow children to understand how data can be useful in a wider variety of ways.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have recently developed improved, robust systems and processes for tracking children's attainment over time in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff now capture and track children's progress across every year group. Senior leaders should continue with plans to track children's progress and attainment in all curriculum areas.
- Most children's attainment across the levels is recovering to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. At times over the past three years, periods of staff absence have adversely affected a minority of children's progress at various stages.
- Data supplied by the school demonstrating children's progress over time shows sustained, and at times improving, good levels of attainment. Current predicted levels of attainment demonstrate the positive impact that strategies to raise attainment are having on improving outcomes for children across the school.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- This session the school has re-established pupil groups and children from across all stages, participate in or lead these. Children are developing their leadership and communication skills well through these groups. The house captains led a recent review of the school values through consultation with their peers. The pupil council has created surveys about homework with a view to improving the experience for children and the health group had responsibility for organising a health week in school. Children who are part of these groups feel a sense of pride in the work they have undertaken. Staff should now plan for all children to be able to contribute to the work of the school through participation in groups.
- The buddies programme allows for Primary 6 pupils to develop their relationships well, decision making skills and leadership skills as they work with incoming Primary 1 pupils. Training for this begins in P6 with pupils building relationships with nursery children. Children also participate in a range of positive experiences beyond the school day. There are extra-curricular clubs such as running, cheerleading and football and P4 pupils have contributed their work to a local art and music exhibition. The P6 children undertake three days of activities to develop a range of teambuilding skills through for example, sailing and fire building and the P7 children all attend a team residential experience.
- Children's achievements in and out of school are recognised and celebrated through house points, playground points, recognition boards, assemblies and hot chocolate Friday. These are linked well to the school values and the school should ensure that there is a shared criteria for awarding points. There should also be a more systematic approach to tracking and celebrating achievements of pupils. This will be supported by the school's plans to introduce profiling across the P3 to P7 stages where children will be able to take responsibility for recording, sharing and celebrating their own achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders and staff have a good understanding of the socio-economic circumstances of children across the school. Through the use of PEF funding, a useful overview of universal and targeted supports, delivered by support for learning staff and partners, has been developed. This is helping to improve the engagement and attainment and achievement, of targeted groups of children. As part of the school's approach to tracking attainment, they have identified the progress made over this school session in relation to attainment and attendance for individuals. Senior leaders should now gather more robust evidence to demonstrate measurable progress for identified individuals and groups of children. This will help to clarify how much targeted interventions and support are being effective.

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.