

# Summarised inspection findings

**Cradlehall Primary School**

The Highland Council

29 November 2022

## Key contextual information

Cradlehall Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Inverness, in The Highland Council. The school is part of the Culloden Academy Associated Schools Group. The school roll across the ten primary classes is 273 children. In September 2021, eight per cent of children on the school roll lived within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles 1 and 2. Ten per cent of children have English as an additional language. The school leadership team consists of a headteacher (HT), a depute headteacher (DHT) with a 0.6 FTE teaching commitment and a principal teacher (PT). At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for seven weeks having previously been the DHT. The substantive PT was undertaking the acting DHT role. There was no acting principal teacher.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

good

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

- Senior leaders and staff place a strong emphasis on developing caring and respectful relationships, where all children and their families are valued. Families feel welcome in the school and staff interactions with children are nurturing and child-centred. Staff foster a strong collective identity across the school whilst recognising and celebrating diversity. The vision of creating a happy, inclusive environment which supports children to be ambitious underpins the work of the school.
- The school's vision, values and aims were reviewed in February 2022. Parents, children and staff feel these are still relevant to the current context and in line with their aspirations for the school community. Whilst the vision, values and aims statements are clearly evident in the culture, ethos and practice of the school, most children struggle to articulate these. The newly appointed headteacher recognises the need to create a simplified version of the vision, values and aims which is more accessible for children. Involving children in this process would support their understanding of the vision, values and aims and identify more easily how these drive forward improvements in the school.
- Senior leaders gather a wide range of data to inform self-evaluation and improvement planning. Since taking up post, the headteacher has identified a number of key actions which would support the senior leadership team to improve outcomes for children. This includes the need to develop clearer ways to monitor and evaluate progress at a strategic level to help inform decision making. For example, an effective tracking system would support senior leaders and staff to monitor the progress of groups and individuals and track progress over time in order to raise attainment for all. The headteacher should review the wide range of assessment data collected to ensure it provides a coherent picture of progress across the school.
- Staff work together well to implement change and improvement. All staff are encouraged and empowered to embrace leadership. Almost all teachers take responsibility for pupil groups or

lead on areas of the improvement plan. Staff feel well supported by the senior leadership team and each other. They are a reflective team who are keen to develop their skills. All staff have regular opportunities for professional dialogue to consider the school's strengths and areas for development. This helps to direct the focus of their professional enquiry. Staff talk enthusiastically about professional learning opportunities and the professional enquiry they are undertaking to improve learning and outcomes for children. For example, one member of staff is undertaking professional learning on nurture. Another is leading on approaches to supporting children and staff's mental health. A focus of both of these developments is to support recovery and improve equity for all learners. Staff have measures in place to monitor the impact of their professional learning.

- All children have a voice in decision making at a school level through the pupil council. There are a number of additional pupil leadership groups including the Eco Committee, Digital Leaders and the Rights Respecting Schools group. Children also have opportunities to influence practice at a class level through weekly class meetings. They talk positively about providing feedback on approaches to learning and teaching and the changes implemented as a result of their suggestions and ideas. Children describe clearly how they contribute to school improvement and develop a wide range of skills through participation in these groups and forums. The headteacher has resumed the use of How Good Is OUR School? to provide a framework for pupil participation and leadership. This would support children to become more formally involved in the self-evaluation process.
- The senior leadership team use an annual quality assurance calendar to monitor, track and evaluate the work of the school across the year. Most staff are involved in self-evaluation activity throughout the year. Senior leaders also seek parental feedback to support their evaluation of the work of the school. Despite the challenges of the last few years, senior leaders can evidence the positive impact of planned developments. For example, children's attainment in reading has improved as a result of new approaches to teaching reading comprehension skills. Almost all parents feel the school is well led and managed, indicating that they feel staff know their child well as an individual and help children to feel confident.
- The leadership team review children's progress with staff at regular points across the year. They use these meetings to plan appropriate interventions for children who have additional support needs or who are not on track with their learning. The headteacher has a clear plan in place for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This plan outlines how PEF will support equity and accelerate progress for targeted groups of children, with identified measures to evaluate impact. Staff should build on this effective practice to monitor and evaluate all interventions in order to ensure change has a positive impact on children's outcomes.

## 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

- All staff know children and families well and work hard to create a calm, nurturing and caring ethos. There is a strong focus on the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Positive relationships are evident throughout the school, with respectful interactions between children, their peers and staff. As a result, almost all children feel they are cared for and supported well at school. Children are welcoming and friendly towards visitors. They are clearly very proud of their school and the active part they play in their school community.
- Overall, the quality of learning and teaching across the school is good. Almost all children are keen to learn. Most children engage well in lessons and value opportunities to work with others. In a few classes, learning and teaching is particularly effective. In these lessons, children are actively engaged in learning that is relevant, challenging and child led, with opportunities for collaborative working and building independence. For example, older children apply their knowledge of numeracy and financial education to inflation and budgeting in the context of the current cost of living crisis. Where lessons are more teacher led and resource driven, this reduces opportunities for children to lead their own learning. Children would benefit from increased opportunities to take ownership of their learning and apply their skills in real life contexts across the school. Staff should work together to build on existing strong practice and offer more open-ended learning experiences which provide appropriate pace and challenge for all children. This would improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching across the school.
- In P1, staff are developing practice in line with national guidance, providing learning experiences which increasingly encourage creativity and exploration. Staff use questions well to extend children's thinking and develop their curiosity. Staff interactions with children are positive and supportive. They provide feedback which helps to build children's confidence. Teachers should continue to develop their use of spaces and resources within the class areas to improve children's experiences.
- Classrooms across the school provide stimulating environments for learning which highlight examples of children's learning and work. In a few classes, children engage with information on display to support their thinking and ideas. Most teaching staff share with children the purpose of learning and how they can demonstrate success. While children can describe the activity and the purpose of the lesson, they cannot always articulate confidently whether they have been successful or not. Staff should now develop children's skills to enable them to co-create their steps to success. This will help children to know more clearly what they are learning and why, and whether or not they have achieved success. Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop a consistent language of learning across the school. This will support children to articulate clearly their strengths and next steps when setting targets in their learning profiles.

- Almost all teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to enhance learning. Children in P7 talk positively about using school devices to complete homework tasks at home. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve the range and use of technology to support learning for all children. They have ambitious plans to improve access to digital technology and are keen to work with the children who are digital technology leaders to roll this out. Digital technology leaders are instrumental in leading developments across the school and have produced guidance for their peers on internet safety. Staff should now focus on how they can support children to build on their digital skills in a more progressive way.
- In all classes, contexts for learning provide opportunities for children to engage in personalisation and choice. Teachers determine what children already know and would like to learn at the outset of new topics, offering children the opportunity to shape the learning by developing research questions. Children's involvement in planning learning should continue to be developed.
- Whilst there are a few opportunities for children to take learning outdoors, staff are at the early stages of using the extensive and varied outdoor environment to enhance and extend learning. Staff should consider how greater use of the school grounds and local area could make learning more meaningful and relevant as well as developing the range of children's skills.
- In most classes, teachers provide high quality, timely feedback to support children's learning. Children talk positively about how this helps them to improve. In almost all classes, children have regular opportunities for self-assessment. All teachers use a range of assessments to determine children's progress and attainment, referencing National Benchmarks for all curriculum areas. Where this is most effective, teachers use ongoing and periodic assessment to inform appropriate next steps for groups and individuals. Staff continue to develop confidence in their professional judgements. They welcome the opportunity to engage once again in moderation activity with colleagues across their associated schools group (ASG). They value the professional dialogue in order to reach a shared understanding of standards across their own and neighbouring schools.
- Teachers use the school's learning pathways to ensure a progressive approach to planning for all curriculum areas. Staff working with children at the same stage across classes plan together to support consistent learning experiences. This practice could be developed further across the school. Teachers meet termly with senior leaders to discuss the progress of all children in their class. These discussions help to identify children who require additional support or whose learning could be extended further. As a result, senior leaders deploy support staff effectively to ensure they have a positive impact on children who require support with their learning. Staff are unable to provide an overall picture of attainment over time for groups or individuals. As planned, senior leaders should introduce an effective method of tracking children's progress more clearly over time.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers use the school's progression pathways in all curricular areas. As planned, staff should review the existing curriculum pathways, updating health and wellbeing, physical education and religious and moral education. In doing so, staff should consider how opportunities for depth and personalisation and choice are built into the curriculum. This will be important in ensuring the curriculum reflects current advice and meets the needs of all children effectively.
- Teachers plan using these pathways to ensure children build on prior learning and make progress in skills, knowledge and understanding. All pathways share the link between experiences and outcomes and National Benchmarks. Teachers are confident in using the experiences and outcomes to plan learning. They now need to use the pathways to identify assessment activity at the planning stage.
- Curriculum plans provide many opportunities for children to learn about Scottish culture and history. The headteacher has identified a need to review and update the curriculum across the school to take account of skills for learning, life and work, sustainability and the UNCRC. Staff should also consider how to make better use of their school setting to ensure relevance for children as they learn at Cradlehall Primary School. To enhance further the curriculum, the headteacher plans to reinstate links with local businesses and the wider community post pandemic. Further opportunities to explore current, 'real life' contexts should also be developed.
- Staff offer a few engaging opportunities for learning in the outdoor environment. Experiences such as using the new poly tunnel to develop the Cradlehall Community Soup Café and hanging basket Eco Enterprise project are good examples of a positive start. Staff should increase opportunities for outdoor learning across all curricular areas.
- Teachers deliver two hours of physical education to all children each week. Physical education is currently taught by either the class teacher or the teacher who provides cover for reduced class contact time across the school. The school's progression pathway for physical education is used to support planning, continuity and progression in learning experiences.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and feel comfortable approaching staff and senior leaders with concerns, queries or ideas. Almost all parents think that their child is well supported, respected and making good progress. There is particular recognition of the advice and suggestions staff offer parents to support their child with learning at home. Teachers use a digital platform across all stages to share examples of children's learning between home and school. Most parents feel they receive regular and helpful information about their child's progress. They report that staff are proactive in making contact when their child would benefit from additional practice or support.
- Parents are appreciative of opportunities to attend workshops, open afternoons and face to face meetings in the school again. They are keen to engage with staff and see their children's work at these events. A few parents would like more information on approaches to assessment and their child's progress.
- Most parents know about the work of the Parent Council, indicating that they are encouraged to get involved. The headteacher works closely with the Parent Council sharing improvement priorities and gathering views and feedback on key developments. The Parent Council is exploring a range of ways to support participation from the wider parent body. This includes a hybrid approach to meetings to allow parents to engage from home.

## 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 that need to be addressed as a matter for urgency.



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- All staff and partners are proactive in promoting positive relationships. Staff treat children fairly and with respect. This is helping to create a climate where almost all children feel safe and secure. The majority of children agree that other children treat them fairly and with respect. A significant number of children are however unsure. Senior leaders and staff should continue to help children develop a better understanding of how children's rights are at the centre of the school's vision, values and aims. They should review their approaches to promoting children's rights to provide all children with a clearer understanding of what these look like in daily school life. This will support all members of the school community to work together with a shared purpose.
- The wellbeing indicators have been discussed regularly at recent school assemblies and are evident on displays throughout the school. Most children agree that teachers discuss with them how to lead a healthy lifestyle. However, only a minority of children can speak knowledgeably about the indicators and reflect on how they help them to understand their wellbeing. Staff should continue to support all children in evaluating what it means for them to be, for example, safe and respected.
- Most children agree that staff listen to their views, and the majority agree that staff take their views into account. Children have opportunities to be included and involved in the life of the school through a variety of pupil groups. For example, a few children from across the school participate regularly in the pupil council. This is helping them to share their views with adults and, by representing their peers, to develop leadership skills.
- Most children enjoy the school grounds at break times and lunchtimes. These grounds are extensive and include a popular 'trim trail'. The grounds also include a poly tunnel for growing vegetables and flowers and a small garden linked to Eco Schools Scotland. Staff are beginning to redevelop both of these areas after the pandemic. A next step for the school will be to make increased use of these grounds to support children's outdoor learning and wellbeing.
- The majority of children enjoy leadership opportunities across the school, both in and outwith class. This includes P7 children acting as buddies for P1 children and a few children supporting the learning of others by being digital leaders.
- Staff celebrate children's individual successes and achievements informally in classes and more formally at school assemblies. These achievements include children contributing to charities, for example The Highland Hospice, The Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC), and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) UK. Children also participate in programmes such as Eco-Schools Scotland. This helps children to develop their understanding of wider global issues and consider the needs of others.

- Senior leaders and staff track children's attendance consistently. This is helping to ensure that all children are able to learn equitably. Senior leaders and staff understand most children's individual needs, including those of the most vulnerable learners. They seek to meet these needs through a range of plans and appropriate interventions. Staff need to improve and ensure increased rigour in their recording, tracking and monitoring of all plans for children. A next step for the school will be to ensure that staff produce clear and sufficiently detailed plans to meet the needs of all children who require additional support with their learning. Senior leaders should ensure these plans include well-targeted interventions that are recorded and evaluated systematically. Staff should invite children and their families to contribute to setting children's targets.
- Senior leaders and staff engage well with partners, including the school nurse, and staff from social work, educational psychology and the neighbouring secondary school. Partners provide supportive interventions for children and their families, which lead to these children and families feeling more confident and settled in school.
- Supported by Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) interventions, a few children are developing a range of strategies to help them make improvements to their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Staff set effective targets for these children, and they evaluate the children's progress regularly. This is helping the school to close the poverty-related attainment gap. Staff also ensure regularly that appropriate interventions are in place so that these children make effective progress.
- Staff and small groups of children enjoy working on a 'learning bus', which is situated in the school grounds. This nurturing environment provides opportunities for children to develop skills relating to their social and emotional wellbeing. Almost all children who work on this bus are motivated by this creative learning space. As planned, staff should re-instate use of the learning bus as a creative learning space for all children.
- Senior leaders and staff continue to try to ensure all children develop their understanding of and appreciate diversity through regular input at school assemblies. They also encourage all children to recognise their rights and the rights of others. The school is in the process of seeking re-accreditation as a UNICEF UK Gold Rights Respecting School. Whilst the majority of children are able to explore diversity and multi-faith issues through the RME curriculum, this is not yet consistent for all children.

## 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

### Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Assessment data provided by the school is based on teachers' professional judgements. As planned, teachers should engage more closely with National Benchmarks to ensure they have a robust approach to identifying children's progress and achievement in listening and talking. Teacher's professional judgements in writing are not always accurate. A greater percentage of children make good progress in writing than data provided by the school indicates. Teachers should continue to engage in moderation activity to support their judgements.

### Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children at early level and the majority of children at first and second levels are making good progress in literacy and English.

### Listening and Talking

- Across all stages, most children are making good progress in listening and talking. Most children are confident and articulate when expressing their views and can effectively take turns during group discussions. Almost all children listen well to instructions from their teachers. At early level, children can ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding and explain their thinking. Most children at second level can listen to and respectfully build on the contributions of their peers. At first and second level, children should develop further their skills and techniques in questioning across the curriculum.

### Reading

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. All children have weekly sessions in the school library where they can access a range of texts. Most children enjoy reading for pleasure. At early level, children are building their reading skills by learning initial sounds. They use picture clues to develop the skills of inference and prediction. At first level, most children read fluently and with expression. They can explain their preferences for a particular author. At second level, children are developing their knowledge of different genres and use this to select texts of interest to them. Most children effectively summarise passages. Children would benefit from more opportunities to explore a wider range of texts such as graphic novels or blogs.

### Writing

- Overall, most children are making good progress in writing. Children across all levels write for a variety of purposes. Most children at early level are developing their independent writing skills and explore vocabulary to use in storytelling. At first level, most children use capital letters and full stops accurately. Effective use is made of contexts for learning to motivate children to write at length. At second level, children learn the key features of different genres and apply this in different contexts. This supports and motivates them to write extended pieces. Children at first and second level would benefit from more frequent opportunities to write shorter pieces. This

would help them to consolidate their writing skills and technique. Across the school, children's handwriting and presentation could be improved.

### **Attainment in numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few children are making very good progress.

### **Number, Money and Measure**

- Most children achieving early level, recall addition and subtraction facts within 20 and can sequence daily routines in time order. By the end of first level, the majority of children solve confidently simple problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. At second level, most children explore calculations involving money confidently. They engage well in financial education, exploring budgeting and the impact of inflation on the cost of living. Children at all stages should have more opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to real-life contexts.

### **Shape, Position and Movement**

- At early level, most children can identify and describe common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At first level, the majority of children build on this, increasing their knowledge of mathematical language to describe the properties and features of common shapes and objects. At second level, the majority of children use mathematical vocabulary such as diagonal, circumference and radius accurately when discussing shapes. At first and second level, children are less confident in their knowledge of angles.

### **Information Handling**

- Across the school, most children extract information from charts, graphs and tables appropriately for their stage. They need to develop further their digital skills in gathering, organising and displaying information, for example, through their use of databases.

### **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders meet termly with staff to discuss attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics for each child. Data for P1, P4 and P7 shows that attainment in both literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics has remained consistent over the last five years. Most children make steady progress each year. The headteacher does not feel the pandemic impacted negatively on attainment due to high levels of engagement from learners. Staff should now look at ways to track other areas of the curriculum, in particular, health and wellbeing. A few children could make even greater progress. The headteacher recognises the need to track and monitor children's progress over time. Once in place, this will allow staff to track more easily the progress children make year on year. Senior leaders and staff will identify more easily trends and patterns for individuals, groups and cohorts over time to ensure all children make appropriate progress.

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

- There are many quality opportunities for children to develop the four capacities as active participants in the life of the school. Children develop skills in pupil groups such as the pupil council, Eco Council and the Rights Respecting Schools group. These leadership opportunities support children to build confidence, strengthen relationships and develop new skills such as cooperation and team working.
- Staff offer a range of clubs and activities which enhance children's experiences including a coding club, cross country running and residential trips. Teachers and senior leaders track children's achievements. Staff use this information to identify children at risk of missing out in order to offer and signpost appropriate opportunities. In addition, they plan to develop further links between children's achievements and skills for learning, life and work.

## Equity for all learners

- Staff know children and families well and understand the socio-economic background of their school community. Teachers use this information effectively to identify and respond to individual needs. Additional costs are minimised through funding secured by the headteacher. This ensures that all children have equal access to all opportunities.
- The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding effectively to provide targeted support for individuals and groups of learners. This is through additional staffing who support identified children using nurture interventions. Additional staff assess, track and monitor effectively the progress of targeted individuals and groups. Evidence shows that these children are making good progress in both learning and wellbeing. Staff demonstrate the progress these children make in literacy and numeracy within individual and group plans that outline targets according to their needs.

## 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.