Summarised inspection findings

Inchture Primary School and Nursery Class

Perth and Kinross Council

11 February 2020

Key contextual information

Inchture Primary School is in the village of Inchture, in the Carse of Gowrie, Perthshire. The village and school roll continue to expand, with the school roll almost doubling in size over the last five years. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 222 children in the primary school. There are nine classes in the primary school, along with the nursery class.

1.3 Leadership of change	very 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 are committed to ensuring they achieve high standards and success for learners. The highly effective headteacher is respected by the whole school community. She leads the school through very well planned changes, prioritising appropriately. She has a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement across the school. She has very successfully built up a culture of empowerment for staff to take ownership of leadership of change and improvement. All of this is resulting in improved outcomes for learners. The headteacher is supported well by the depute headteacher. Senior leaders work very well together, highly valuing contributions of stakeholders and supporting the strong commitment to continuous improvement.

■ In conjunction with stakeholders, the headteacher has led the revision of the school's vision, values and aims. Through active collaboration, all stakeholders have a good understanding of the vision and values for the school; 'strive to be the best we can be'. Children share confidently how the vision and values are evident throughout all aspects of school life.

■ The school improvement plan takes account of the vision and values as well as national priorities. The plan identifies key priorities: numeracy, digital learning and feedback to support learning. There are early signs of positive impacts through, for example, the revised approach to teaching numeracy, resulting in improved attainment. The school uses creative approaches to illustrate school improvements, such as their helpful pupil version of the school improvement plan. As planned, the headteacher should share the school improvement journey and successes with stakeholders in a variety of ways.

■ There is a culture of collaborative leadership at all levels throughout the school. The headteacher has successfully created conditions where staff feel confident to initiate well-informed change and lead key aspects across the school. Through empowering staff, effective leadership at all levels is turning the shared vision into a sustainable reality. Examples include teachers leading each of the school improvement priorities. The headteacher protects time for professional dialogue, collegiate learning and self-evaluation. Staff are all involved in agreeing the priorities for improvement, based on evidence from self-evaluative activities. Support staff take forward changes, for example aspects of literacy and leading specific

interventions to support individual learners. As the headteacher has identified, the next step is to continue to review impact of actions, on an on-going basis.

- Staff are very outward looking and regularly use research to support improvements. Examples include small tests of change, research with university partners and practitioner enquiry. Staff frequently visit other schools, with a focus on improvement. Staff share their learning with colleagues within school and across schools in the local authority. Staff are benefiting from developing partnerships across the Tayside Regional Improvement Collaborative (TRIC), including shared professional learning.

- Staff value the importance of annual review. Senior leaders are proactive in supporting a wide variety of opportunities for professional learning, including leadership development for staff. This includes learning opportunities across the United Kingdom or abroad. Through these opportunities, members of staff undertake accredited professional learning to improve the school. Senior leaders build capacity and encourage all staff to consider their career progression.

- Parents support the school improvement journey through formal parent council links and helpful involvement in many aspects of school life. The headteacher seeks regularly the views of parents through, for example, questionnaires or surveys to parents or feedback on school events. The school benefits from a very supportive parent council. The parent council's many fundraising activities result in additional improvements, for example playground developments and supporting equity of opportunity.

- Children, particularly in the upper stages, have a strong voice in the school. This includes leadership groups such as pupil voice, citizenship group, health and wellbeing and eco council, along with class responsibilities. Leadership groups share their successes, achievements and changes they have made in various ways, including through regular school assemblies. Children share confidently their pupil friendly version of the school improvement plan with parents. As the headteacher is aware, there is potential to extend leadership opportunities for children in the earlier stages of school. There is a need to continue to outline the impact of children's leadership roles.

- Partners within and outwith the Inchture community support the school very well. Partners report the continued strong relationships with the school. Examples include local businesses, allied health professionals and organisations, all of whom support broadening learning opportunities during and beyond the school day. There is potential to extend involvement of partners further in evaluative activities in relation to school improvement.

- The headteacher and staff are very aware of the needs of children and their families. The headteacher has taken positive steps to acquire and analyse data regarding the unique context of their extending school community. Senior leaders and staff gave careful consideration to use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Targeted interventions have been initiated to support children, including, additional teacher time. Examples of additional approaches include support with social skills, outdoor learning to build resilience, opportunities for achievement outwith school. Parents are involved in decisions regarding use of additional funding, for example, activities to support transition.

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

■ Throughout the school, there are positive relationships between staff, children and their peers. There is a strong nurturing ethos where children are happy in their environment. Children are very welcoming and confidently share their learning with visitors. The recent focus on promoting positive relationships and Inchture's values is resulting in behaviour which is of a high standard.

■ Across the school, children enjoy learning, are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Almost all learners interact well and are engaged during learning. Children work well independently, in pairs and in groups. Children feel that adults actively seek their views and opinions. They are eager and active participants in school life. Staff share routinely the purpose of learning activities with children. In almost all lessons, children are clear about how to achieve success. There is appropriate challenge for most children in most lessons. Children are motivated where learning is stimulating and staff match activities well to their needs. Staff should ensure there is more consistent approach to challenge and extend children's learning, to achieve maximum success.

■ In almost all lessons, staff provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions which support children's learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and build on prior learning. Increasingly, children have opportunities to exercise choice in their learning and engage in tasks which encourage creativity and critical thinking. As identified, teachers should continue to develop higher order thinking skills. At times, learning can be overly teacher-directed, which can restrict learning. As planned, staff should develop further opportunities to enable children to develop greater independence. There is potential to review a few class routines to ensure that all learning time is maximised. Staff should continue to encourage children to consider how the skills they are focusing on relate to the world of work.

■ Staff use digital technologies effectively to enhance learning at all stages, supported by recent additional resources. Children are increasing in confidence in sharing learning through digital technologies. Staff should continue with plans to use digital technologies to enhance learning and share learning with parents.

■ Across the school, children share their learning in a variety of ways. Teachers engage children in learning conversations to reflect on their progress. Children are gaining confidence in leading aspects of their learning, through sharing learning with parents, learner-led conferences and use of portfolios. An increase in the level of challenge in aspects of mathematics is an example of change as a result of learner conversations. Senior leaders consult helpfully with the school improvement pupil group to monitor the impact of staff talking to them about their learning.

- Staff are developing the use of assessment as an integral part of planning. A helpful assessment calendar includes formative and summative assessment, along with unsupported writing tasks. Staff identify interventions effectively and plan next steps for learners. Staff are gaining confidence in analysing information and data from standardised assessments to identify specific needs and review approaches. Staff are beginning to integrate the use of holistic assessments and should continue to develop this approach. Staff recognise the need to extend use of the National Benchmarks to support assessment and moderation across curricular areas.

- Quality feedback from teachers, particularly verbal, supports children to improve their learning. Self, peer and teacher assessment is evident throughout the school. Children confidently speak about teachers' feedback that supports them to know what they have learned well and what they need to improve. They are developing their skills in peer feedback. The school should continue with their focus on supporting children to identify independently meaningful next steps in their learning.

- Teachers plan lessons well across the curriculum, at appropriate levels, based on the experiences and outcomes of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Teachers find out what children already know and build on prior learning. Forward planning follows a consistent format throughout the school. Medium term plans, "learning trees", are helpfully shared with parents. Learners are involved in aspects of planning. This is helping motivate children in their learning and supports them in asking questions to further their thinking. As planned, teachers should continue to develop children's skills as learners, by involving them in planning their learning.

- Senior leaders discuss regularly tracking information with staff, including predictions for individual and group attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff identify appropriate support and interventions to address any concerns regarding children's progress. There is now a need to extend teachers' tracking and monitoring of attainment across all curricular areas. As planned, staff should continue to work together, and with other schools, to develop a shared understanding of national standards.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

■ There are progression pathways in place for numeracy and mathematics and aspects of literacy and English. A three-year overview of 'bundled' CfE experiences and outcomes helpfully guides teachers' planning in other curricular areas. It supports teachers to match contexts for learning to children's interests or relevant issues. The headteacher and staff now need to ensure that progression pathways support children's learning and progress across all curricular areas. A next step is for senior leaders and staff to track children's skills and progress across the curriculum.

■ The newly developed progression pathway for numeracy and mathematics is beginning to support teachers' planning. As identified, the school needs to develop this further with a focus on conceptual understanding and mental strategies. Teachers need to build on children's prior learning and to ensure continued progress. Children would benefit from more opportunities that support revisiting and applying their mathematical skills in a range of contexts.

■ Staff take responsibility for developing mental, emotional and social wellbeing across the school. Children use these skills well in a range of meaningful contexts. Children have opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and digital skills across the curriculum.

■ The four contexts of the curriculum provide many opportunities for children to learn through engaging and relevant contexts. Links with the school's wider community and opportunities to learn outdoors further enhance learning. Staff plan learning using the seven design principles. Staff now need to ensure children's knowledge, understanding and skills build appropriately over time. Children would benefit from more regular opportunities to revisit their learning.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners–parental engagement

■ The headteacher and staff know families very well and provide well-judged support to children and families. The school enjoys positive partnership working with many parents and partners. There are strong partnerships with the Parent Council, which includes many fund-raising activities supporting the school. Recent examples include developments of the school playground and an increase in digital technologies.

■ Parents volunteer regularly their skills or time in school, enhancing learning experiences for children. As a result of volunteering their time in school, several parents have successfully gained employment in schools.

■ Parents welcome opportunities to learn with their children. Staff offer shared learning sessions in each class in the school. As a result of feedback, the school changed their approach to parent-teacher sessions. These now include a mixture of learner-led conferences and parent-teacher contact sessions. The headteacher plans to build on these successes to involve parents further with their children's learning. She is also mindful of considering opportunities where parents are unable to attend during the school day. Staff and children are currently piloting sharing learning with parents through digital technologies.

■ Parents and partners are very involved in sharing their skills with children throughout the school, to support aspects of the curriculum. A variety of local and community partners work closely with the school, including, for example, health professionals, service personnel, local businesses within Inchture and the NSPCC.

2.1 Safeguarding

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

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	very good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

■ wellbeing
■ fulfilment of statutory duties
■ inclusion and equality

■ The headteacher places a high priority on the wellbeing of children and their families. Children and families are treated with dignity and respect. Across the school, children benefit from very positive relationships with adults and each other. Senior leaders effectively engaged children in the creation of a positive relationships policy. This ensures a consistent approach to managing children's emotions and behaviour across the school. Commendably, the headteacher and children review regularly and adapt this policy to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the school community. Almost all children report that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Most children feel that other children treat them fairly and with respect.

■ Children articulate confidently the school vision, values and aims. Teachers refer to the values in their teaching and display them prominently in their classrooms. Children develop their understanding of the impact of the values on the life of the school through a well-planned assembly programme.

■ Children are developing an understanding of resilience through a whole school approach to positive mindset. Teachers should continue to embed this in their practice. This should support all children to identify and use these strategies to reflect on themselves as learners.

■ Children have a very strong understanding of wellbeing indicators and articulate well how they impact on their lives. Children confidently use interactive wellbeing webs in their classrooms to explore issues that arise. This supports children to improve their wellbeing and to resolve disagreements. All children reflect effectively on their own wellbeing and complete a wellbeing web self-assessment twice per year. Teachers use these assessments to plan highly effective supports for individuals in their class. The headteacher uses this information to plan whole school supports and programmes. For example, she worked with a local organisation to plan and deliver a programme of outdoor learning to support identified classes to build resilience. Parents report very positively about the impact of this experience. Children who participated are more confident and feel more included in the life of the school. Children talk positively about the support they receive, their strengths and areas they are developing.

■ Children in P7 work alongside teachers to deliver health and wellbeing lessons across the school through the 'Feel Good Friday' programme. Children benefit from this planned, progressive learning, based on the wellbeing indicators. Children in P7 value the responsibility this role gives them and the contribution it makes to their growing confidence and self-esteem. Children across the school have a strong understanding of how to keep healthy. They talk confidently about how regular physical activity and making healthy food choices contributes to their wellbeing.

■ Children's participation in their leadership groups helps them to be valued and respected members of the school and local community. Older children support younger children as

- buddies. Children in P6 help others across the school to keep active at break and lunchtimes. They take responsibility leading play and games in their role as Mini Play Rangers. As a result of this, they share their learning and train children in P5.

- Senior leaders and Active Schools staff track and monitor children's participation in clubs and activities. They identify groups and individuals who are not participating and offer activities that will meet their needs and interests. As a result, participation rates have risen consistently over the last few years. Commendably, a few children lead clubs within the school. Almost all children report the school offers opportunities to take part on activities beyond the classroom and school day.

- The main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007 are being met. Children have access to free drinking water throughout the day. The school meal service is promoted to parents and children. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure those entitled to a free school meal are not openly identified. Older children take responsibility for supporting younger children in the dining room. They undertake these roles with kindness, care and respect, exemplifying many of the school values.

- Inclusion and equality is a strength of the school. There is a strong and sensitive focus on individual needs and children's wellbeing. Staff use a range of approaches and interventions to overcome potential barriers to learning, participation and achievement. Children with potential barriers to learning are supported very well. Child's plans outline clear, measurable targets. Staff review these regularly to ensure children are making appropriate progress. Where appropriate, partner agencies are actively involved in creating child's plans and in evaluating their impact. All targets are written in child-friendly language. As a result, children can articulate their targets.

- Teachers receive planned, high-quality professional learning on supporting children who need additional support with their learning. The support for learning teacher provides valuable input to enable teachers to develop their provision of effective universal and targeted support. This is beginning to lead to improved outcomes for children and is closing the attainment gap. Teachers should continue to develop approaches to supporting children facing barriers to their learning.

- Pupil support assistants (PSAs) provide highly effective support to children across the school. Their timetables are flexible and based firmly on the needs of individuals and groups. This ensures children receive well-planned, targeted support when it is required. Teachers use weekly 'booster sessions' with PSAs, to provide children with responsive and timely support to meet needs as they arise.

- The headteacher has clear and highly effective procedures for monitoring attendance. She works closely with families to improve children's attendance when required. The headteacher works with families to create bespoke plans to support overcoming difficulties in getting children to school. As a result, attendance has improved significantly for individual children.

- All children have access to literacy, numeracy and sensory support boxes with a range of resources. This universal approach allows children to manage and direct the support they receive. Staff should build on this positive approach to support further children's involvement in planning and evaluating support they receive.

- Children's understanding of diversity, discrimination and protected characteristics is developing well through health and wellbeing lessons. They are at the early stages of learning about children's rights. Teachers should continue to embed learning about children's rights and equality into the curriculum.

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, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. As identified, there is scope for a minority of children to achieve even more.

■ School data accurately indicates that attainment is predicted to rise in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and teachers are continuing to extend the use of data and moderation to ensure professional judgements are increasingly robust.

Attainment in literacy and English
Listening and talking
■ Overall, children are making good progress in listening and talking. At early level, the majority of children listen well to their teacher and peers. A few children require support to take turns in group and class discussions. At first level, most children take turns during class and group discussions. The majority respond well to others using non-verbal techniques, for example, nodding in agreement. A few children ask their peers relevant questions during group discussions. At second level, most children listen well to each other during class and group discussions. Most build on others ideas and share their own opinions in a sensitive way.

Reading
■ Overall, children are making good progress in reading. At early level, children know the difference between letters, numbers and symbols. They can identify initial single sounds with increasing confidence. The majority read simple words. Children are not yet blending letters and sounds. The majority of children use picture clues to predict what might happen in familiar stories. They are not yet confident at discussing their favourite stories. At first level, most children read fluently and a few use expression. Most children self-correct as they read and use strategies to decode unfamiliar words. The majority of children know the features of non-fiction books and explain their purpose. At second level, most children skim and scan texts to find key information. Most children generate literal questions based on their group's novels. However, they are not confident at generating inferential or evaluative questions. Most children talk about the basic differences between fiction and non-fiction texts. They are not yet confident at using the appropriate language to describe the features of non-fiction texts.

Writing
■ Overall, children are making good progress in writing. Most children at early level are beginning to develop their independent writing skills through mark making. Most form letters correctly. With support, the majority of children write words, lists and basic sentences. Most children do not yet use capital letters and full stops in their writing. At first level, children write for a wide range of purposes. The majority use effectively an increasing range of punctuation to vary their sentence structure. A few children use paragraphs to organise their ideas. Children at first level apply their learning in 'free writing' jotters. At second level, children write for an increasing range of purposes. The majority vary their sentence structure to maintain the reader's interest.

They create and use word banks to extend their use of interesting vocabulary. A few children do not use capital letters, full stops or punctuation well.

Numeracy and mathemtaics
- Overall, the majority of children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure
- Most children at early level work confidently with numbers to 20. Most solve problems and display their answer in a range of ways. Across the school, children calculate amounts of money. They are not yet confident in calculating change. Most children at first level have a good understanding of place value. They solve 3-digit addition and subtraction problems using a range of strategies. They order fractions correctly. Most children calculate the total cost of items accurately. Children at second level solve problems involving perimeter and area within real life contexts. Children are not yet confident in using decimals, percentages and fractions.

Shape, position and movement
- Across the school, most children work with an increasing range of two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects. Children are not yet able to use mathematical language to describe their properties with confidence. Children across the school have an understanding of angles and directions.

Information handling
- Across the school, children undertake surveys and display and interpret information in a range of ways. At early level, children use tally marks to record information accurately. At first level, children display and interpret data on a scientific bar graph. At second level, children display data in a range of ways, including pie charts. Overall, children need more opportunities to develop these skills including through digital technology.

Attainment over time
- Senior leaders and staff have implemented a range of strategies to raise attainment in writing, numeracy and mathematics. School data indicates that the school has raised attainment in literacy and numeracy over the past three years.

Overall quality of learner's achievements
- The school recognises and celebrates achievements well in assemblies, newsletters, learner-led conversations, school achievement accreditation schemes and pupil portfolios. This includes celebration of achievement outwith school. The headteacher records achievements in a way that ensures no child misses out. As a next step, staff need to support children to link the skills they are developing both within and outwith the school. As planned, the school needs to monitor and track these to support progression.

Equity for all learners
- All staff understand the socio-economic background of children and their families. They provide support that is specific to each situation. They are proactive in ensuring no child is in danger of missing out and work creatively with families to achieve this. The headteacher works proactively to build relationships with families to ensure support is responsive to need.

- The headteacher plans carefully for the use of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). PEF provides targeted support for individual and groups of children. Data provided by the school evidences the positive impact that interventions are having on raising attainment for these children.

School Empowerment

■   Teacher autonomy and opportunities for leadership

■ The headteacher has very successfully built up a culture of empowerment for staff to take ownership of leadership of change and improvement. There is a culture of collaborative leadership at all levels throughout the school. The headteacher has created conditions where staff feel confident to initiate well-informed change and lead key aspects across the school. Through empowering staff, effective leadership at all levels is turning the shared vision into a sustainable reality. Examples include teachers leading each of the school improvement priorities. The headteacher protects time for professional dialogue, collegiate learning and self-evaluation. Staff are all involved in agreeing the priorities for improvement, based on evidence from self-evaluative activities. Support staff also take forward changes, for example to aspects of literacy, or leading specific interventions to supporting individual learners.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- Children in P7 work alongside teachers to deliver health and wellbeing lessons across the school through the 'Feel Good Friday' programme. Children benefit from this planned, progressive learning, based on the wellbeing indicators. P7 children value the responsibility this role gives them and the contribution it makes to their growing confidence and self-esteem

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.