

Summarised inspection findings

Hyndhead School

Fife Council

12 December 2023

Key contextual information

School name Hyndhead School
Council: Fife Council
SEED number: 5407842
Roll (Oct 2023): 27

Attendance is generally above the national average (93.2%)

Hyndhead School is situated in the Buckhaven area of Fife. Children and young people attend from a wide geographical area and all have additional support needs. At the time of the inspection there were 15 children at primary stages and 12 young people at secondary stages. The headteacher had been in post since August 2023. Although the school remained open during Covid-19, parents and partners were not able to regularly access the school in person until August 2023.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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

- Since taking up post in August 2023, the headteacher has started to engage well with staff, parents and partners. The headteacher is committed to working collaboratively with the whole school community to implement change and improve outcomes for all children and young people. The school community is supportive and positive. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a good understanding of what is required to take forward improvements. These include reinstating quality assurance approaches and reviewing the needs of children and young people, in partnership with parents and partners. With the support of the local authority, he is well placed to take forward this vision. The headteacher recognises the need to now work closely with the whole school community to develop values and aims that reflect high aspirations and relevant learning for children and young people.
- The headteacher has made a good start to welcoming parents and partners into the school and supporting them to meet face to face with staff. This increased engagement is supporting better joint working with families. In addition, it helps staff to take forward their plans to widen the range of experiences for children and young people in the local community.
- The headteacher and staff are working well together to progress priorities for the school. Staff take appropriate responsibility for leading improvements and this has resulted in positive outcomes for children and young people. For example, the recent focus on communication for children and young people has led to significant improvements and better use of communication resources. Staff should now review the priorities identified for this year and continue to take forward agreed actions.
- The headteacher has identified the need to improve self-evaluation approaches across the school in order to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. These approaches should include a greater focus on evaluation of opportunities provided for planned learning and the attainment and achievements of children and young people. There is a need to include parents and the wider school community in self-evaluation approaches.
- The headteacher has implemented quality assurance approaches to inform the work of the school and support improvement. These are at the early stages of implementation. For example, he has taken part in activities in classes to gain a better understanding of the needs of children and young people. The headteacher and staff should continue to develop quality assurance approaches.
- Almost all staff are committed to improving their own practice through professional learning and development. Teaching and support staff have engaged in a range of professional learning to support pupils. These include signing, moving and handling and communication approaches. The headteacher has implemented a professional learning calendar to ensure that all staff have opportunities to discuss their specific professional learning needs. Professional learning

for staff should include working in partnership with partners and allied health professionals. This will allow staff to develop the skills and confidence required to deliver therapeutic programmes. Staff are reflective about their own practice and how they can better engage children and young people in their learning. They understand well the individual needs and strengths of pupils. Staff would benefit from more opportunities to engage in professional learning to support their practice. This should include visits to other establishments and engagement with other practitioners.

- The recently formed parent council is keen to be involved in the work of the school including self-evaluation and improvement planning. They are supportive of the headteacher and staff. Parents value the work of the school and recent improvements in communication and engagement. They find the digital application that is used by staff a very useful tool for understanding their child's learning. The headteacher should now continue to meet with parents and the Parent Council to engage them better in the work of the school.
- The newly formed pupil council is at the early stages of leading on initiatives. They are beginning to plan activities for other pupils such as the Halloween party and have delegated tasks to classes. School staff should continue to support all children and young people, including the pupil council, to understand and participate in meaningful and relevant leadership opportunities.
- Staff have a good understanding of the social and economic factors that impact on children, young people and their families. The school receives Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This funding has been used appropriately to provide additional support such as music therapy and activities to improve physical fitness. The headteacher recognises the importance of carefully monitoring and evaluating the impact of PEF to raise attainment, particularly for children and young people who may be disadvantaged by their socio-economic status.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Across the school, most children and young people benefit from a positive learning environment and caring culture. This provides a calm, settled ethos for learning. Staff use their knowledge of children and their families to develop nurturing relationships. They use praise well and encourage learners to do their best. Almost all staff support learners appropriately when they become disengaged. This supports most children return to return activities in appropriate timescales. As a result, most children and young people are motivated and enjoy being in school. In most lessons, children and young people engage with their learning and are supported by appropriate levels of direct staff intervention.
- Teaching approaches take good account of the individual needs of children and young people. In most classes, the pace of learning is appropriate, and activities are well differentiated. In a few classes children and young people require more challenging activities and opportunities to apply their learning in relevant contexts such as through lifeskills activities. Teachers should continue to develop how they plan for groups of learners to work together with less adult support to develop independent learning where possible. There is a need to improve teaching and learning at specific times during the school day such as after lunch. Current staff deployment results in too much time after the lunch break when children and young people are not engaged in well-planned learning activities.
- Staff make appropriate use of digital technology and this supports children and young people well to access learning. All pupils have access to tablets. They use these across a range of activities such as literacy, recording their work and reading quick response (QR) codes.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on inclusive, total communication systems. Children and young people communicate through sign, objects of reference, symbols, and communication aids. Visual timetables are used well to enable children and young people to understand their day, engage in learning for longer periods of time and reduce anxiety. Staff use visual cues effectively to support access to learning. Inclusive communication approaches are positively impacting on the progress of almost all children and young people.
- Staff provide opportunities for children and young people to make meaningful choices in their daily routines and in lessons. For example, at snack time and lunch time the majority of children and young people can choose from two options. Staff should extend the choice available to help develop independence and decision making even further.
- The school is developing outdoor learning. Staff should continue to implement a wider spectrum of outdoor learning experiences to complement other learning. Together these will form a more progressive and coherent range of experiences for children and young people.

- Staff are at the early stages of implementing play pedagogy. They recognise the value of play for children and the need to ensure that play approaches and the environment meet the additional support needs of children. With support from the local authority, staff should engage in professional learning to support them to implement learning through play.
- Personal learning plans are used to outline the steps to be taken to help children and young people to achieve specified learning outcomes. Teachers should review targets to ensure that they are aspirational and provide sufficient challenge for young people.
- The school has begun to use formative and summative assessment evidence to monitor and track learners' progress and achievement. Analysis of this evidence should be a core aspect of monitoring, tracking and target setting approaches. This will inform future planning. Teachers should make better use of tracking information to ensure that the pace of learning is appropriate for individual learners. The school needs to develop a coherent, systematic approach to tracking progress across the broad general education (BGE), Senior Phase and include wider achievement. The headteacher and staff should regularly revisit learners' targets to ensure all children and young people are making the best possible progress. Teachers involve parents in supporting their child's progress by sharing targets and including their views in setting the next steps for learning.
- Teachers are becoming more confident in applying their professional judgement on learners' progress. They are in the early stages of moderation work with peer schools across the local authority. Continuing to do this will ensure that there is a greater consistency of standards in relation to the milestones and Curriculum for Excellence levels. Milestones for literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics are being used well to support learners with complex additional support needs. The school should develop staff confidence in analysing and interpreting data and extend their use of National Benchmarks in all areas of the curriculum. This will help inform professional judgements and predictions about national levels of attainment.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The headteacher and staff have identified the need to review and refresh the school's curriculum rationale. They need to ensure that this leads to a high quality, meaningful and progressive curriculum across the school. As they progress this work, staff should take cognisance of the four contexts of learning and revisit approaches to interdisciplinary learning.
- The headteacher and staff are at the early stages of developing learning pathways to raise attainment and provide high quality learning experiences. At the senior phase, young people currently engage in a cycle of curriculum activities over a three-year period. Senior leaders and staff should revisit this approach. In doing so, they should ensure the senior phase curriculum is progressive, aspirational and takes full account of young people's needs and interests.
- Children and young people are not yet receiving the minimum national recommendation of two hours of quality physical education (PE). As planned, senior leaders should work to ensure that all children receive the national recommendations, and that PE offers progression in challenge, quality, and application of skills.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The school has a newly formed Parent Council who are predominantly focusing on fund raising for the school. The Parent Council are keen to be more actively involved in the life of the school and improvement planning.
- Parents value the communication that they have with teaching staff and this has strengthened the relationship between home and school. This includes daily feedback on their children's progress and achievements via a digital platform. Senior leaders and staff now need to continue to develop ways to involve parents in their child's learning. Parents could be encouraged to share learning that happens when children and young people are not at school. This should then be celebrated and captured as wider achievement.

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

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

- Children and young people benefit from positive relationships with staff and with each other. As a result, they are happy and confident. They show an awareness of each other and have positive friendships. Almost all staff support children and young people well to feel safe. The headteacher and staff have worked together to improve the school environment. They should continue with this work in areas such as the dining room and quiet room to create an even better warm and welcoming ethos.
- Appropriate personal learning plans are in place for all children and young people. These contain useful information such as strategies to support pupils to regulate emotions and individual learning targets. After a lengthy period since Covid-19, the new headteacher is developing approaches to reassess the needs of pupils and update individual plans. Staff, parents and partners are now able to meet face-to face and discuss supports and interventions. The headteacher, together with parents and partners, should continue to prioritise assessing the needs of children and young people to ensure required supports are in place.
- The headteacher has introduced good approaches to recording the strengths and needs of children and young people at review meetings with partners and parents/carers. These new recording approaches detail clearly what is working well for individual pupils and what else needs to happen to support them. Reports are parent friendly and provide clear actions that need to be taken forward.
- Most staff work well with partners such as allied health professionals to ensure programmes and interventions are delivered effectively. This allows children and young people opportunities of participation in learning and improvements in their wellbeing. Joint working between staff and partners now needs to be more consistent across the school. More opportunities for professional learning and working alongside therapists and specialists will enable all staff to fully support children and young people.
- Staff focus appropriately on helping children and young people understand their own health and wellbeing and what they need to do to be healthy and safe. Staff use Getting it Right for every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators well to identify individual targets that children and young people work towards in order to improve their wellbeing. Almost all pupils achieve their targets. As they develop approaches to individual planning, staff should continue to ensure health and wellbeing targets are appropriately challenging and result in improved wellbeing outcomes.
- The headteacher and staff have an awareness of statutory duties. In line with local and national guidance, safeguarding and child protection approaches are effective in identifying

and meeting the needs of children, young people and families who require support. Senior leaders involve other agencies as appropriate in order to refer and seek support about concerns they have for children.

- Through the health and wellbeing curriculum, children and young people are developing an understanding about their own emotions and the importance of healthy food and physical health. Staff provide a good range of appropriate resources and activities to support children and young people to understand their sexual health. As they improve the curriculum, staff should ensure that programmes and courses are relevant, meaningful and meet the individual wellbeing needs of all learners.
- School resources and the school campus provide opportunities for children and young people to improve their physical fitness. Staff should now pursue how they can improve wellbeing further by using the on-site hydrotherapy pool and local amenities. The headteacher has recently involved partners to support physical wellbeing and sport. This partnership will provide more opportunities for children and young people to participate in sport, competing with others and physical activities.
- Most children who face challenges in regulating their behaviour are supported effectively. Staff use de-escalation approaches in line with national guidelines, individual behaviour plans and risk assessments. As a result, children and young people feel calm and are provided with appropriate time to regulate before engaging in learning. Staff are trained in physical intervention approaches and when used, they are recorded appropriately. Staff currently use a dedicated room to support children who are experiencing challenging behaviour. Staff should ensure that they comply with national and local guidance in relation to seclusion at all times. Staff have welcomed the recent introduction of informal debriefing sessions. Debriefing sessions should take place after all incidents and include discussions about previous circumstances.
- Children and young people learn within an inclusive and nurturing ethos. Staff are committed to ensuring that all learners have equal opportunities to participate and achieve success. All children and young people access free lunches and there are no costs associated with attending school.
- Children and young people are learning about different cultures and religions. Staff should extend this work further and support pupils to learn about a wider range of protected characteristics.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall, taking account of individual learner profiles, most children and young people are making good progress in literacy and English. The majority of children and young people are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A few learners need to be challenged appropriately with their learning in order to achieve more.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children and young people are making good progress in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children and young people are making choices and expressing their views through a range of communication approaches. This includes low tech and high tech augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). In order to strengthen their communication skills further, children and young people should have more frequent and varied listening and talking learning experiences. Staff need to ensure that listening and talking activities provide all children and young people with sufficient challenge.

Reading

- Most children and young people are developing their pre-reading and reading skills well. Staff's consistent use of visual timetables is enabling almost all children and young people to develop functional literacy skills. As a result, almost all children and young people read or recognise symbols. A few children and young people can use word timetables.
- Most children and young people working at the early stages of milestones show an interest in a range of stories. Most participate well in story telling lessons. They respond well to rhymes, songs and stories, particularly when practical resources are used to augment the learning. Most children and young people working at the upper levels of milestones explore a story book or text to find objects and pictures. They understand and recognise characters within a story. At early level, most children and young people follow simple stories using objects and pictures. A minority of children and young people share their opinions about books they like or dislike. Children and young people would benefit from more opportunities to read with meaningful contexts such as labels on products and signs in the local community.

Writing

- Across the school, most children and young people are developing their fine motor, pre-writing, and writing skills well. They show appropriate progress from prior levels of attainment. Most children and young people working at the early stages of milestones can hold, grasp and release tools for writing. They explore mark making and create simple patterns and sequences.

Children and young people working at early level and first level would benefit from more opportunities to apply their writing skills across the curriculum.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children and young people are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children and young people are making satisfactory progress. At all stages, children and young people would benefit greatly from more opportunities to apply their numeracy skills in new and unfamiliar contexts.

Number, money and measure

- Most children and young people at the early stages of milestones follow and track a stimulus when it moves and explore objects using their senses. At varying levels, they participate in nursery rhymes and songs, which involve an introduction to number. Most children and young people working at early level, independently sequence numbers up to 20 and identify the number before and the number after. A minority of children and young people sequence numbers up to 100. They understand the sequence of events through practical activities such as following visual daily timetables. Most children and young people are comparing the size of objects using everyday language such as bigger and smaller. At early level, most children and young people could strengthen their understanding of the use and value of money.

Shape, position and movement

- Most children and young people at the early stages of milestones take part, to varying degrees, in activities and games related to shape, position and movement. They use positional language and concepts of movement, speed and direction. At early level, the majority of children and young people match objects and shapes by colour and size. They are not yet confident in exploring the properties of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They need to understand further the properties of shape through play and real-life situations.

Information handling

- Most young people working at first level have developed an understanding of tally charts and bar graphs. They would benefit from reinforcing their knowledge and skills within this organiser in a variety of ways, including through the use of digital technologies.

Attainment over time

- Based on data and evidence provided by the school, the majority of children and young people at the BGE make satisfactory progress with their learning and engagement over time. A minority of children and young people are making good progress. However, a few children and young people could achieve more.
- School tracking systems do not yet consistently provide reliable information to track children and young people's attainment and progress over time. With improved approaches to tracking attainment and progress, there is scope for children and young people to attain and achieve better. Senior leaders and staff now need to ensure that they analyse data and evidence of children and young people's progress over time more robustly. In doing so, senior leaders and staff will be more able to focus on improving children and young people's attainment and progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers have had very few opportunities to engage in meaningful moderation activities. As a result, moderation is not informing teachers' professional judgements of children and young people's progress in the BGE. Senior leaders need to build links with neighbouring schools to help establish systematic moderation activities. This will help teachers improve their confidence in making professional judgements on how well children and young people are progressing with their learning.

- Since 2021, most young people in the senior phase have gained a large number of National Qualifications units, predominantly at National 1. They successfully achieved awards across a range of curriculum areas including literacy, numeracy, science, personal achievement, and religious and moral education. However, there is potential for young people to achieve more. In developing the curriculum, teachers need to provide young people with more opportunities to gain National 2 and National 3 awards across a wide spectrum of curriculum areas.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Across the school, children and young people's participation in personal achievement activities is widely recognised and celebrated. Learners' achievements are shared through digital platforms and classroom displays. Children and young people are proud of their successes and achievements. Staff should now focus on incorporating children and young people's emerging skills in their achievements.
- The headteacher and staff are beginning to establish valuable community links to provide learners with more personal achievement activities. Children and young people participate enthusiastically in school trips such as an excursion to a local farm during lambing season. They also enjoy weekly visits to a local community cafe. As a result, children and young people strengthen their communication skills and resilience. A minority of learners in the senior phase participate successfully in work placements. Staff should build on this promising start. They should continue to identify further personal achievement activities for learners of all ages, including accreditation where possible. Children and young people across the school would benefit greatly from more opportunities to build their skills in leadership and working with others.
- The headteacher and staff should start to track the skills children and young people are developing through their participation in personal achievement activities. This will help children and young people to identify better the skills they are learning and reflect on their own progress.
- The school did not have accurate information on young people's post-school destinations. Working closely with partner agencies, young people at the senior phase are starting to engage well in bespoke programmes aimed at building their life skills and employability skills. As a next step, staff should strengthen links with Skills Development Scotland and local college providers. This will help facilitate the introduction of bespoke transitions to support young people to move on successfully upon leaving school.

Equity for all learners

- The headteacher and staff have a detailed understanding of the range and complexity of children and young people's needs at the school. They provide equitable support which helps children and young people access learning better. Senior leaders have used Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide therapeutic input for identified children. They track the impact of these PEF funded interventions, with a focus on learners' engagement and communication skills. In taking this forward, the headteacher now needs to measure the impact of PEF funded interventions on accelerating children and young people's progress and attainment. This should include evidencing improvements for those children and young people most affected by poverty.

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.