

Summarised inspection findings

Cawdor Primary School and Nursery Class

The Highland Council

12 September 2023

Key contextual information

Cawdor Primary School is a non-denominational school in the village of Cawdor, south-southwest of Nairn in Highland Scotland. The school is part of the Nairn Academy associated schools' group (ASG). At the time of inspection, 132 children attend the school over six classes. The headteacher has been in post for almost three years. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises the headteacher and one principal teacher.

Attendance is generally in line with the national average. There have been no exclusions from 2020/21 to the present date. In September 2021, seven percent of P5-P7 pupils were registered for free school meals and 37% of pupils had additional support needs. The school reported that currently 27% of pupils have additional support needs. No pupils live in 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Children are very proud of their school and exemplify the school values of kindness, teamwork, belonging and respect. They are polite, responsive and welcoming to visitors to the school. Positive and respectful relationships amongst children and between children and adults lead to a very nurturing ethos across the school. This results in very calm, purposeful and positive learning environments, in which children learn well.
- Across the school, all teachers ensure children have opportunities to share their views and exercise choice in their learning. For example, children in all classes help to plan their learning which uses links across different subjects through their "Cawdor Quests." As a result, children engage very well with their learning. There is strong practice in how learners' views influence what and how they learn.
- Almost all children engage enthusiastically in their learning. They are highly-motivated and interact well during teacher- and child-led activities. At all stages, children work effectively individually, in pairs and in groups. In almost all lessons, teachers use a variety of approaches to ensure experiences are matched well to the needs and interests of all children. Most children experience learning that is well paced and provides opportunities for them to develop their independence. Teachers should continue to ensure that tasks and activities are set at the right level of difficulty for all children.
- All teachers give clear explanations and instructions. They share the purpose of learning and support children to understand how to be successful. Most teachers use questioning techniques effectively to check children's understanding and to deepen their learning. Staff should continue to develop approaches to effective questioning to give children the opportunity to develop higher order thinking skills.

- Children receive very useful feedback from their teachers. This helps ensure they understand their progress and next steps in learning. Children have regular opportunities to self- and peer-assess their work. This helps them take more responsibility to reflect on and improve their learning. This includes setting and reviewing their individual targets. Staff should continue to develop approaches to help children talk about their strengths, next steps and the skills they are developing during their learning. This should help children recognise better some self-help strategies and their awareness of the importance of skills for learning, life and work.
- Teachers and early years practitioners have worked closely together to develop play pedagogy across the early years' experience. Teachers create learning environments that support children be curious and develop independence. Staff use spaces effectively to motivate children and encourage play and interactions. Children access play freely at appropriate times. Staff are well placed to continue to develop the use of play to support children's learning through exploration and investigation.
- Outdoor learning is an important, positive, feature of learning and teaching. Staff make particularly good use of the extensive school grounds and nearby woodlands. Good partnerships with the Community Council and Cawdor Estate support outdoor learning well. As a result, well planned and relevant outdoor learning experiences are motivating children and promoting curiosity, independence and creativity. Staff should continue to support children develop their understanding of the important skills they are developing through outdoor learning experiences.
- Children make good use of digital technology to support their learning. For example, they use technology to research and present information. Older children access and update online learning profiles and use useful digital tools regularly. They engage enthusiastically with a range of digital tools to enhance their learning experiences. Teachers across the school use interactive whiteboards, laptops and tablets well to engage children and support children in their learning.
- The headteacher led the development of an annual assessment calendar which outlines shared expectations of what is to be assessed and when. All teachers use a wide range of formative and standardised assessment strategies well. They use National Benchmarks effectively to support their professional understanding of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels. Teachers are continuing to develop their approaches to planning high quality assessments both within Cawdor School and with colleagues across the ASG. This is improving teachers' confidence when assessing children's application of learning in different contexts. Teachers should continue with this approach to support further staff's consistency in providing reliable professional judgements of achievement of a level.
- All teachers plan effectively over the short, medium and long term. They consider children's interests when doing so, to ensure relevance within planned learning experiences. Stage, and CfE level, partners plan collegiately to ensure consistency across the school. Staff use local authority progressive frameworks effectively to plan learning and assessment across all curricular areas.
- Teachers and leaders have very effective processes in place to track and monitor children's progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss individual children's progress. This enables them to identify early, any children who may require additional support, consolidation or extension in their learning. Together, the headteacher and class teacher plan suitable interventions to support children's progress. This approach should now be developed across other areas of the curriculum.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Almost all children in P1 and P4, and all children in P7 attained expected CfE levels in listening and talking in 2021/22. Most children in P1 and P4, and almost all children in P7 attained expected CfE levels in writing in 2021/22. Most children attained expected CfE levels in reading and in numeracy in 2021/22. There were improvements in almost all measures of attainment from 20/2021 to 2021/22.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is very good. Most children make very good progress in all areas of literacy, but particularly in listening and talking.

Listening and talking

- At early level almost all children listen attentively to adults and follow directions well. They communicate effectively with each other and take turns to contribute their ideas and opinions both in small group and whole class situations. At first level almost all children listen and respond to the ideas of others respectfully when working in pairs or groups. They ask and answer questions and recall key facts. They recognise the difference between fact and opinion. Almost all children at second level are highly articulate and express their opinions effectively. They talk with confidence and are enthusiastic when engaging in discussion with adults and children. Children are very respectful, ensuring everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

Reading

- Children enjoy reading and make personal choices about what they like to read. At early level most children are developing their strategies for reading, building knowledge of sounds, letters and patterns to read words. At first and second level almost all children share their favourite authors and explain reasons why. At first level they read texts with fluency and expression. They summarise the main ideas within a text. A next step is to develop further their understanding of the features of non-fiction texts. At second level children show enthusiasm for reading. They confidently discuss the writer's choice of language. They answer a range of questions, including literal and inferential, to demonstrate their understanding of text. Staff should continue, as planned, to develop further the school library to promote children's reading for enjoyment.

Writing

- At early level almost all children are developing their mark making and writing skills through a range of play experiences. Children working at first and second level write for a range of purposes and audiences. The standard of presentation within written work is high. At first level, most children effectively use adjectives and conjunctions. They use relevant and interesting vocabulary appropriate for the context. At second level, almost all children write appropriately

in different genres and write a range of extended pieces of writing. Through their good use of vocabulary, children are developing their skills to write in more complex ways to engage the reader. Staff should continue to develop opportunities for children to develop their writing across different genres.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, attainment in numeracy and mathematics is very good. Most children make good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measure

- Most children at early level work confidently with numbers to 20 and recognise and use a range of coins. They would benefit from further opportunities to learn about time. Most children at first level round whole numbers to the nearest 10 and competently solve two-step problems. Most children would benefit from further experiences using fractions. Children at second level round decimal fractions to the nearest whole number to two decimal places. Most enthusiastically solve simple algebraic problems. Across the school children are less confident about solving word problems, including those involving money.

Shape, position and movement

- Almost all children at early level enjoy using blocks to create shapes and describe three-dimensional objects using simple criteria. At first level most children use mathematical language to identify a range of simple two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They know the compass points, north, south, east and west. Most children, at second level, enthusiastically describe how to measure both area and volume of three-dimensional shapes and identify a range of angles in the environment well.

Information handling

- At early level, almost all children sort objects of different shapes, sizes and colours in different ways. At first level, most children select different ways to gather data and display their findings in bar graphs. At second level, most children ask and answer questions on, for example, favourite food and sport, and display their findings using tally marks, pie charts and bar graphs. Across the school children need more opportunities to develop skills in information handling including through using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have developed comprehensive tracking and monitoring processes. These, together with increasingly robust self-evaluation activities, enable teachers to track and monitor the progress and attainment of individuals and groups of children effectively. These processes allow teachers to identify children who require additional support or challenge in their learning. Staff use the regular planning and attainment meetings well to review children's progress and agree the next steps for identified children, groups and cohorts. Robust attainment data, and effective moderation processes, demonstrate most children are maintaining high standards of attainment. A few children exceed national expectations. As a next step, staff should consider tracking and monitoring attainment across more curricular areas.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children, across the school, achieve very well through a range of well-planned programmes and activities. These include through a range of 'Masterclasses' where children have the opportunity to select particular skills development activities. The extensive range of school clubs enables children to participate in sports including football, athletics, badminton, golf and orienteering. All children in P7 children gain 'Junior Leader' awards while leading playground games. A minority of children represent the school in football matches and cross-country competitions across the ASG and authority. This helps children develop confidence and social

skills. Staff promote a wide range of cultural activities through drama and the Youth Music Initiative. Children recognise how these opportunities improve their self-awareness and creativity skills. A few children, as part of the 'Sustainability Squad,' are developing their collegiality and communication skills through planting trees and their plans to build bird boxes for the school grounds.

- Staff celebrate children's achievements both in and out of school effectively. Teachers track and monitor children's participation in wider activities. This enables teachers to identify children who may be at risk of missing out from these valuable opportunities. As a result of taking part in 'Masterclasses' and other wider achievement opportunities children are developing a range of skills. Staff should now, as planned, focus on helping children recognise and record these skills, including meta-skills.

Equity for all learners

- Staff across the school have a very good understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. The Parent Council and local businesses, support staff effectively to help reduce the cost of the school day. The headteacher's strong partnerships with local agencies such as the Community Council and Winds of Change, helps provide financial support for educational excursions. This ensures that children, who may be a risk of missing out, are not disadvantaged.
- Teachers are able to demonstrate an increase in the percentage of children who are 'on track' to attain expected CfE levels for literacy and numeracy. This includes those children who benefit from specific interventions supported by the Pupil Equity Fund. As a result, the attainment gap between children who are most disadvantaged, and their peers is closing.

Practice worth sharing more widely.

Outdoor learning is an important, positive feature of learning and teaching at Cawdor Primary School. Community links have been developed through partnerships including with the local Community Council and Cawdor Estate. Staff make particularly good use of the school grounds and nearby woodlands. Children are motivated to learn through well planned and relevant outdoor learning experiences. These experiences also help promote children's curiosity, independence and creativity.

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.