

Summarised inspection findings

Crudie School

Aberdeenshire Council

21 May 2019

Key contextual information

Crudie School is a small rural school, eight miles north-east of Turriff. At the time of inspection, there are 25 pupils in the primary school, taught between two classes Primary one to four and Primary five to seven. The school works closely with Fintry School, King Edward School and other schools across the Turriff Academy school cluster.

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

- There is a very positive ethos and culture throughout the school, which reflects a commitment to children's rights and positive relationships. Staff have created a very positive climate for learning. Children who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaires stated that they feel safe in school. Almost all children indicate that they enjoy learning. Throughout the inspection children are keen to learn, are very well behaved and interact well during their learning.
- Children are offered enjoyable learning experiences in well-resourced and motivating learning environments. Children understand the purpose of and have opportunities to lead their learning. Staff discuss with children if they have been successful in their learning. As planned, staff should continue to ensure that children are clear how to achieve their targets for learning, and what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Overall, almost all learning is well matched to the needs of children, with staff addressing differentiation in learning as appropriate. As the headteacher has identified, there is a need to continue to review challenge in learning, in order for children to achieve more. Plans for staff to continue to develop and embed higher order thinking skills should support this.
- Lessons are very well organised and prepared. Staff use a range of learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, and employ creative teaching approaches. Their explanations and instructions are clear and helpful. Children are offered opportunities to lead aspects of their learning, for example through their Doric poetry and studies of areas of interest. As the headteacher has identified, children should be provided with more opportunities to lead and plan their learning. From our pre-inspection questionnaires, children indicate that they are comfortable approaching staff with questions or suggestions. All staff work very well together as a whole staff team, and know children and families extremely well. The staff team all take leadership responsibilities, supporting activities within and outwith the classroom.
- Digital literacy is a strong focus throughout the school. Digital technologies are used extremely well throughout the school by staff and children to enhance and enrich learning, for example, through use of individual tablets from Primary one to Primary seven, or through the use of Glow for individual and class blogs for sharing learning. Children are confident in using their digital skills throughout all aspects of their learning. Examples include videoing their mental agility challenges in mathematics, or creating animations with apps, of their craft activities.

Children use the many opportunities well to develop and extend their skills in areas of interest through technologies, for example robotics, animation, working with apps. As a result of this, children are becoming digitally skilled. Crudie School has also achieved great success in competitions against a range of schools of varying sizes, for example the 'Judges Award' in the recent robotics Vex IQ challenge. They are working well towards their Digital Schools award.

- Children's experiences in Crudie are greatly enhanced through a wide range of activities beyond the classroom and the rural location. Examples include various after school activities across the school and fortnightly school groups that all Primary three to seven pupils are members of, such as Nature Nurturers, Health Heroes, Waste Warriors and Rotakids. To enhance further children's experiences, Crudie School links closely with neighbouring schools of Fintry and King Edward, for activities such as sports events and residential trips to Dalguise. These activities also aid transition to secondary school. The school values very much their strong partnerships with parents and community partners, many of whom offer their skills to support learning opportunities. All children are members of the Pupil Parliament and have a strong voice in improvements to aspects of school life. Children share many examples of items they have discussed at Pupil Parliament and how these have been addressed. The school now needs to link further pupil voice and leadership to aspects of the school improvement plan to involve pupils further in key decisions about school improvement.
- Teachers engage children well in learning conversations to reflect on their progress. A whole school visual learning journey is helpfully shared on the wall of the school hall. Children speak confidently about how helpful feedback from teachers supports them to know what they have learned and what they need to improve. There are many examples of quality feedback being used to support children in improving their learning. There is now a need to develop and extend children's skills in supporting each other with appropriate peer feedback on their learning.
- Overall, a variety of assessment information and approaches are used, including information from daily observations of learning, children's work, or standardised assessments in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Teachers report increased confidence in their use of professional judgements of Curriculum for Excellence levels. Teachers use information well to plan next steps for learners. Teachers are involved effectively in moderation of learning with staff from other schools, including Turriff Academy, which supports sharing of standards to be achieved. Along with teacher professional judgement, staff are beginning to consider assessment being used in a more holistic way. We agree with the school's plans to continue with moderation activities, along with engaging further with the Aberdeenshire Frameworks and national benchmarks.
- Lessons are planned well and are based on the experiences and outcomes across the curriculum at appropriate levels. Staff's forward planning is based on the national benchmarks. Children are involved appropriately in planning aspects of their learning, for example, within interdisciplinary learning contexts. This helps motivate children in their learning and supports them in asking questions to further their thinking. Staff have identified a need to continue to provide more opportunities for children to plan for and lead aspects of their learning. Whilst there are examples of many relevant real life learning opportunities, there is a continued need to support children in their ability to identify their skills they are developing through their learning and how these support them for learning, life and work.
- Through regular termly planning and tracking meetings, the headteacher and staff track the overall progress of individual children in literacy, numeracy and more recently in health and wellbeing. Progress is tracked against teachers' predictions for attainment. Teachers identify children who are not making appropriate progress and discuss and plan intervention strategies.

These are reviewed to reflect progress. As a next step, the headteacher and staff should continue to ensure positive impact of strategies on children's progress. Staff's continued work on developing an understanding of appropriate pace through the levels for individuals would help support the school's drive to raise children's attainment further.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

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

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

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

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

Crudie School is a small school, where the number of children in cohorts varies and is often fewer than four. Therefore, overall statements have been made about progression to ensure anonymity for individual children.

- Overall, attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. The data presented by the school demonstrates that most children are achieving appropriate standards in reading, listening and talking, and in numeracy. The majority of children are achieving appropriate standards in writing. School data indicates that most children, including those with additional barriers to learning, are making appropriate progress towards achieving the expected Curriculum for Excellence level. From our inspection activity, we agree with the school's predictions.

Literacy and English

Reading

- Overall, children's attainment in reading is good. At early level, children can read simple texts aloud and use their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words. At first level, most children read fluently and are beginning to add expression to their reading. At second level, most children read with accuracy, fluency and expression. Most children can comment on some of the techniques used by authors to engage the reader. The school has recently implemented a new strategy to improve standards in reading and engage reluctant readers. There are early signs of positive impact from this. As planned, the school should continue to develop a whole school reading culture to improve pupils' attainment in reading further.

Writing

- Overall, children's attainment in writing is satisfactory. The headteacher is aware that children, at all levels, are capable of achieving more and that there is a need to raise the standard of children's written work. At early level, the majority of children are beginning to form letters legibly and can share information in pictures and use simple text. At first level, the majority of children can use connectives and are beginning to start their sentences in a variety of ways to engage the reader. At second level, the majority of children can write in a variety of formats and can use a range of punctuation. Children would benefit from developing their skills in writing at length to help them improve their standards of spelling, punctuation and presentation.

Talking and listening

- Overall, most children are making good progress in listening and talking. Children are polite and respectful. In class, almost all children listen well to teacher instructions and respond respectfully to others. Through activities such as the Crudie community café, children can talk and listen to others in different contexts. All children are involved in welcoming people to the school, serving guests and chatting to members of the community. At early level, most children

listen well. They are beginning to talk about their learning and can share ideas with their peers. At first level, most children talk clearly and audibly, expressing opinions and preferences. At second level, most children can contribute relevant ideas to group discussions and can explain their thinking about a topic.

Numeracy and mathematics

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

Number, money and measurement

- At early level, most children can count forwards and backwards within 20 and can add to ten. They can link daily routines to time sequences and know the order of the days of the week and months of the year. At first level, most children can solve addition and subtraction problems with three digit whole numbers and can tell the time using digital and analogue clocks. At second level, most children are confident rounding numbers and can correctly select the most appropriate units for measurement. Pupils now need to develop their skills further in fractions, decimals and percentages to ensure a thorough knowledge and understanding of these concepts.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children can identify and describe common 2D shapes and 3D objects. They can use the language of position and movement correctly. At first level, most children can identify right angles and can create designs with one or more lines of symmetry. At second level, most children can measure and identify different types of angles, and can plot points using coordinates.

Information handling

- At early level, most children can match and sort items. At first level, children use tally marks to record information. They understand and can use Venn and Carroll diagrams. At second level, children can draw bar and line graphs and can interpret information from graphs and charts.
- Overall, children at all levels would benefit from more regular opportunities to consolidate their numeracy and mathematics. Children's skills in mathematical understanding and their ability to recall number facts needs to be strengthened.

Attainment over time

- Overall, most children are making good progress from their prior levels of attainment. Over recent years attainment over time has improved, with most children achieving expected Curriculum for Excellence levels. Given the size of the school, individual stages are not identified here. Through tracking meetings, the headteacher has a very good overview of pupil progress and is able to review the attainment of individuals and cohorts. As discussed, staff should continue to review strategies used to ensure impact on children's progress.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Commendably, children achieve many successes, through the wide range of opportunities within and outwith the classroom, which is a strength of the school. The school encourages involvement in the wider community and beyond, and takes advantage of opportunities for children to achieve success, for example, by taking part in various competitions. Examples include the Doric Neuk poetry competitions, robotics Vex IQ challenge, and various sporting successes within the small schools and wider Turriff Academy cluster. Overall, this is helping to develop pupils' confidence and communication skills are developing well through the wide variety of opportunities offered. Achievements and successes within and outwith school are celebrated well, through, for example, assemblies, school displays, newsletters or the school blogs. Children are rightly proud of their many successes. A number of the school's lunchtime

clubs are planned and run by pupils. A wide range of clubs is provided for the children by staff and partners. Such activities are popular with pupils and are helping to contribute to the positive community ethos in the school.

- The school tracks and monitors wider achievement and participation in activities. Targeted support is provided to enable all pupils to benefit from these activities. As a next step, there is scope to help pupils identify and track the skills they are developing through their wider achievement activities.

Equity

- Staff use their knowledge of children and their families to offer support to pupils who are facing barriers to learning. Both teaching and support staff have taken part in professional learning to enhance their ability to provide support for pupils. Through monitoring and tracking, interventions are planned and evaluated. As a result of whole school and targeted interventions, such as the focus on improving reading, outcomes for pupils are showing early signs of improvement. Overall, motivation for reading has also improved.
- The headteacher works with the school community to ensure that finance is never a barrier to equity of experience for all learners. The parent council raises funds to subsidise school events and trips, and has helped to provide funding for additional resources. A portion of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to purchase tablet computers, for all pupils, to support pupil learning. Due to this, pupils have increased access to digital learning opportunities throughout the school, resulting in improved digital skills.

Other relevant evidence

- The school values very much their strong partnerships with parents and community partners, many of whom offer their skills to support learning opportunities. The headteacher should continue to work in partnership with parents, particularly in areas as identified in pre-inspection questionnaires, in order to achieve continued improvements and success for all at Crudie School.

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.