

# Summarised inspection findings

**Glass Primary School**

**Aberdeenshire Council**

**SEED No: 5226422**

**26 January 2018**

## Key contextual information

Glass Primary is a small rural school in Aberdeenshire. The headteacher is class committed three days a week. The school benefits from visiting specialists for music, physical education and art.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**satisfactory**

This indicator focuses on working together at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which reflects the context of the setting within its community. Planning for continuous improvement change should be evidence-based and clearly linked to strong self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure that the pace of change is well judged and appropriate to have a positive impact on outcomes for children. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the setting and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change.

- The headteacher is committed to developing a supportive ethos in the school where children feel valued and enjoy learning. In questionnaires and focus groups parents are very positive about the school's leadership. They appreciate the open door policy and the way school staff know children very well. The welcoming whole-school ethos is a strength of the school and all staff aim to sustain this approach.
- The school's vision, value and aims were created in consultation with children, staff and parents. These are displayed prominently on entry to the school and reflect very well the inclusive ethos of the school. Continue, as planned, to revisit the vision, value and aims ensuring that it reflects more effectively the context of the school and the local environment. In doing so, there is a need to reflect the unique context of the school and harness the rich learning environment that surrounds the school. In addition, the aims lack sufficient focus on children achieving their potential and making very good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher and staff work collaboratively with the Parent Council on priorities that inform the school improvement plan. They focus on improving the school and celebrating the children's success in their learning and wider achievements. There is a need to revisit approaches to self-evaluation and make more effective use of evaluative evidence to identify priorities and measure the impact of change on outcomes for children.
- All teaching staff including the visiting specialists, willingly take on leadership roles that reflect their strengths. As a result, there is impact from leadership opportunities on children's progress in science, art, music and physical education. Staff work well to maintain the school's role in the community. Staff are reflective practitioners and benefit

from working within the Huntly Cluster. They access professional learning including the targeted work led by the local authority to improve the quality of learning and teaching for Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). There is a need to continue to develop their understanding of standards and share good practice within the school and across the cluster. In doing so, ensure that clear tracking systems focus staff attention on the impact of learning pathways and targeted improvements on children's progress. Staff are developing well their understanding of benchmarks to focus outcomes from children's experiences.

- Aberdeenshire Council supports headteachers in small schools with teaching remits to monitor and support NQT and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) practitioners. Staff are observed and receive written feedback. There is a need to embed these processes into the whole school approach to self-evaluation and ensure greater consistency in learning and teaching across the school.
- Recently the school introduced a quality assurance calendar to increase the rigour of approaches to self-evaluation. The calendar is shared internally with staff and aims to increase the pace of change and provide triangulated evidence when evaluating and managing the change process. There is a need to embed these approaches and extend its reach to visiting specialists and stakeholders with a lead role in supporting and developing staff within the school.
- Children participate in a range of leadership groups that are led by staff. Moving forward there are opportunities to develop further children's leadership skills to influence more effectively the life and work of the school. In addition, this will develop important skills for learning, life and work such as resilience, team-working and problem-solving.
- There is a need to review the vision, values and aims taking account of closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plan does not reflect a clear rationale for change with planned interventions based on self-evaluation to close the poverty related attainment gap. Revisit the national operational guidance to ensure that the conditions of grant are followed. In addition, contact Education Scotland's Attainment Advisor for Aberdeenshire Council for additional support.

## 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

- During observed lessons the ethos and climate in classrooms was very positive. Children support each other during discussions and work effectively as individuals and in small groups. Most engage enthusiastically in all set tasks and activities and, when given the opportunity, work independently to complete a series of tasks. There is a need to increase further the level of challenge children set themselves. For example, the spelling matrix provides a worthwhile opportunity for children to complete tasks linked to Bloom's taxonomy. Sampled work shows most children consistently select 'recall' tasks. As a result, although children could spell the words, they are challenged by meaning and do not apply the new vocabulary in the context of writing.
- Older children accurately describe their skills in relation to Developing Young Workforce (DYW) standards. They accessed the World of Work website to extract information and write a report about their chosen career and pathways. This approach is positive, children worked very well and it challenged their thinking. They are eager about these tasks and enjoyed interviewing their parents about careers. They produce reports using technical vocabulary specific to a wide range of careers. There is a need to continue to build on children's skills in working independently. There are a number of missed opportunities to enable them to assume greater responsibility with leading their own learning that challenges their thinking.
- Planned learning is well organised and in the best practice tasks are differentiated to meet the needs of children within the multistage context. Children systematically follow a planned schedule enabling the class teacher to focus on small groups. There is scope to ensure all tasks are set at the correct pace for children. Expectations of what children can do are not high enough and the pace of learning is too slow with children spending too long consolidating their learning. There is a need to review the implementation of 'The Mile A Day' and 'soft start'. Ensure these experiences are meaningful and extend children's learning.
- In all lessons observed, teachers share learning intentions and the majority of children were clear of the purpose of lessons. In the best examples, children reflect on their learning with confidence. They use this information well to identify their strengths and next steps. It supports teachers to differentiate effectively taking account of children's prior learning. The practice needs to be consistent across all learning. In addition, children respond positively to opportunities where they co-create success criteria with class teachers. This will enable them to develop a greater understanding of themselves as learners.

- When given the opportunity children skillfully use self and peer assessment strategies. However, they do not have sufficient skills in talking about their learning and feedback to peers is often limited in quality. For example, with a greater understanding of the skills and techniques within reading, children will improve the quality of vocabulary used in peer assessment tasks. Samples of work did not show clear written feedback to children which would support them to improve.
- Continue, as planned, to implement the learning journals to record children's progress and enable them to know themselves as learners. Assessment folders have a range of children's work that is not dated or showing what children have achieved. Personal targets are displayed but not reflected in the children's work. Children are articulate and confident about sharing their learning. They are well placed to develop a vocabulary to describe themselves accurately as learners.
- Children enjoy using digital technologies to share their learning. They confidently use PowerPoint presentations and interactive features of the digitalised whiteboards to share knowledge with the class about health. In science, children film presentations about their learning using suitable vocabulary such as diaphragm and trachea. They share this with children in the class and online. They confidently use tablets and Apps to consolidate learning in mathematics and numeracy. However, the school is at the early stages of developing creative use of digital technology to enhance learning.
- The Aberdeenshire progression pathways and benchmarks provide a suitable framework to develop a meaningful and reliable approach to assessment. Staff are involved in the Huntly reading moderation activities which provides assessment and verification opportunities. In addition, they will be involved with Quality Assurance and Moderation Officer within the near future. However, the school is at the very early stages of moderating children's planned learning. Staff are at the early stages of developing their professional judgement of children's achievement within a Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) level. As a result, planned learning and assessment does not have sufficient depth and challenge.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning Pathways

- The school vision, values and aims of the curriculum are displayed throughout the school and shared with children, parents and staff. This vision was developed to underpin the design of the curriculum and permeate the Aberdeenshire curriculum frameworks that provide progression for children's learning. Staff are beginning to plan using the vision, values and aims and increasingly reflect the context of the school.
- Learning pathways in art, music and PE, developed by the visiting specialists, are well planned and children are developing a range of appropriate skills. Visiting specialists and teaching staff plan collaboratively to reflect the contexts that children are learning about during the core learning and teaching sessions. As a result, teaching and learning delivered by the visiting specialists is meaningful. There is a need to develop all learning pathways across all curricular areas and ensure the highest expectation of children's learning. Learning in numeracy and mathematics overly relies on published schemes and does not reflect well enough the design principles of breadth and challenge.
- Forward planning is undertaken by all staff and provides a pathway for planning children's learning. However, there are too many different facets to planning which impact negatively on the pace of learning. There is a need to review the approaches to learning and take account of tackling bureaucracy guidance to streamline approaches and focus on the impact of planned learning.
- There is a need to develop a strategic overview that reflects the context of the school more effectively. The school benefits from a local environment that is a rich source of learning. In addition, there are missed opportunities to develop important skills for learning, life and work in meaningful contexts.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners - Parental Engagement

- Parents are highly supportive of the school and attend fundraising and community events which celebrate children's learning. They receive regular newsletters and welcome the open door policy of the school to discuss any issues or concerns.
- The recent sharing of the learning in art at the art exhibition was particularly well received and children displayed their art work throughout the school. Children are beginning to set personal learning targets in learning journals which they will share with parents.

## 2.1: Safeguarding

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

### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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

- Wellbeing
- Fulfilment of statutory duties
- Inclusion and equality

- The school has a positive ethos and questionnaires indicated that children feel safe and well looked after. Staff know the children and their families well and are aware of individual circumstances. There is a need for the school to revisit the identification of priorities for wellbeing taking account of the local context. Continue to ensure children's wellbeing needs are identified and developed using clear interventions that are evaluated.
- The school is at the very early stages of rigorously applying 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) principles. Children's wellbeing is not assessed, monitored or tracked sufficiently well using the health and wellbeing indicators. Staff are not clear about the wide and diverse factors that may affect children's wellbeing and how barriers to learning can be removed.
- The school issues questionnaires which overall are positive about the views of children and the parents. Qualitative data from the inspection indicates that there is a need to explore further children's views of how well children treat each other with fairness and respect. Children in focus groups have a good awareness of staying safe online and healthy eating. They are less confident about discussing mental and emotional health issues relevant to their age and stage of development.
- The school supports children's pastoral needs on a one to one basis and there is a need to ensure that the range of on-going and summative assessments across literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing support children's emotional growth. Referral procedures are too varied. There is a need to ensure that all systems in place are sustainable and rigorous irrespective of personnel involved.
- Develop further children's understanding of their rights through exploring the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In doing so reflect on professional attitudes and beliefs to ensure fairness and equity for all.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

weak

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

- The school's assessment data consists of teachers' judgement, on-going assessment and standardised assessment information. The school is at the very early stages of moderating levels. From observed lessons, teachers' planning and children's sampled work shows that they make very good progress in art and music and good progress within science. However, there is insufficient evidence to show children's progress in literacy and numeracy and the school's CfE assessment data was not reliable.
- Attainment in literacy is weak. As a matter of urgency there is a need to ensure that children have a breadth of experience across all the literacy and English organisers.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school children listen well to their teachers and most listen well to each other. The regular opportunities for children to work together provide worthwhile opportunities for children to demonstrate their listening and talking skills. However, children are unable to describe their skills in listening and talking or identify features of effective listening and talking skills across a breadth of curricular area and contexts. Learning captured on video shows that there is much room for improvement in developing children's listening and talking skills.

### Reading

- Across the school children enjoy reading and participate in peer and self-assessment. Most read regularly for pleasure and across a range of genre.

### Writing

- There is a need to improve the quality of children's writing and ensure a brisk pace of learning. Children do not write often enough or use appropriate technical vocabulary or punctuation. They are limited in the breadth of genre covered and do not have sufficient opportunities to write.

### Numeracy and mathematics

- Children make good progress in number. They are developing well their written calculations and know basic number facts. They do not have breadth of learning and as a result do not make sufficient progress across all organisers.

### Shape, position and movement and Information handling

- At the early level most children can identify 2D shapes and 3D objects. There is limited evidence of children secure in their knowledge of shape by the end of P7.

### **Attainment over time**

- The school is at the early stages of providing rigorous evidence of children's progress over time. There is a need to improve the capturing of data to show children's progress more effectively.

### **Attainment across the curriculum**

- By the end of P7 children make very good progress in art and music. They know a wide range of artists and can replicate their techniques in their own art work. In French older children know greetings and can understand basic conversations. In music they compose tunes using digital software. In science, children can describe the functions of a diaphragm and lungs.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- Children's achievements are celebrated well in wall displays and they are proud of their achievements. They are at the early stages of recording their achievements through personal learning journals. Their participation in leadership groups is developing well important skills for life.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff are aware of the need to meet the learning needs for all. Staff do support children and their wider families with issues that affect their emotional wellbeing. They are less confident about closing the poverty related attainment gap and the identification of children affected by poverty.

## School choice of QI: 2.5 Family Learning

- **Engaging families in learning**
- **Early intervention and prevention**
- **Quality of family learning programmes**

- The school plans to build on the strengths in family engagement to create a strategic approach to family learning. They have some good examples of children as individuals benefiting from informal targeted support for particular families. Supports are needs driven and may be a short or long term intervention. Next steps for all staff is to be clear about the purpose of family learning, ie to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap. In doing, so there is a need to audit current approaches taking account of advice within the recent publication that reviews family learning and identify the next steps taking full account of the context of the school and the needs of the parents. Develop further the strengths in targeted and universal support through a whole school strategic plan.
- In developing family learning further there is a need to identify the learning outcomes and benefits of initiatives and interventions from the following five key areas; new skills; increased confidence and understanding; improved communication; changed behaviours; and, changed relationships with community and family. In doing so, there is a need to focus on outcomes that may be reflected in improved attendance and attainment. This can include a focus on wider participation, skills development, employability, progression into further education.

## 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.

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