

Summarised inspection findings

Nesting Primary School

Shetlands Islands Council

2 September 2019

Key contextual information

Nesting Primary is a small rural school located in the north east of the Shetland Isles mainland area. Its roll at the time of the inspection is 20 children arranged over two multi-composite classes. The headteacher has been in post for nine months. She is successful in building effective relationships, accurately evaluating the strengths of the school and forming a strategic vision for further improvements.

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

- Staff show commitment to the care and welfare of children and create a welcoming atmosphere where children feel safe and enjoy learning. The school's values of respect, sharing and fairness contribute to the development of the school's positive ethos. Positive relationships between children and staff are evident across the school. Almost all children enjoy coming to school and are developing confidence as learners. Children are developing a range of skills through whole school, group and individual activities, including opportunities for pupils to share interests and support one another at show and tell activities. The school is developing nurturing and inclusive approaches to create a supportive learning environment for all children.
- Most children engage positively with the tasks they are set. They are enthusiastic and motivated when provided with activities well-matched to their needs and interests. Teachers work closely together when planning for learning. However, it is evident that in a few lessons differentiation does not always meet the needs of all children. A few children are capable of increased expectations and most of taking greater responsibility for learning together in cooperative groups. Teachers work well together and are well placed to share effective practice in differentiation and classroom management with one another. Most children understand the purpose of learning and the relevance of the skills they are developing. In a few activities, children are given responsibility to lead their own learning and thrive when given these opportunities. There is scope to develop this further across the school.
- In a few lessons, teaching is effective in motivating children but this is not yet consistent across all learning. Too many lessons and activities are teacher-led with direct questioning of the whole class being a regular approach used to explain the tasks children will go on to do individually. The school should now develop further approaches to learning and teaching to ensure all children experience an appropriate level of pace and challenge to meet their learning needs and maximise their progress. Teachers are committed to professional learning to enhance their practice. Improving consistency in the quality of learning and teaching should continue to be a focus of school self-evaluation and school improvement planning. As part of this process, teachers should work collaboratively across the school to agree a shared understanding of features of highly effective practice. They should now introduce effective formative assessment strategies across the school to ensure all children are engaged and

understand themselves more as learners. In most lessons, children are provided with a range of verbal feedback. Teachers should continue to develop high quality written feedback to ensure children understand their progress in learning and next steps for improvement. This will allow children to become more effective in setting their own learning targets.

- All teachers provide clear instructions and explanations. In the majority of lessons, learning intentions are shared and the nature of the task is explained. As a next step in developing children's understanding of their progress and when they have been successful, teachers should involve children in co-creating learning outcomes. This would be most meaningful if linked more closely to individual learning targets. In almost all lessons, teachers use questioning well to determine children's understanding. Higher-order thinking skills should be developed further by embedding effective questioning to improve the level of challenge for all children and build on their ideas more consistently.
- Children regularly access laptops and desktop computers and software across the school. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching. Children practise skills in numeracy and reading at desktop computers. There is scope to further increase the use of digital technologies to further develop children's skills in information handling and presentations. The staff are well placed to take forward the education authority's digital support package.
- Teachers are at the early stages of using National Benchmarks to support their professional judgements of children's progress and achievement. Teachers have made a recent start to using a range of standardised assessments, including the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, to support their professional judgements. The headteacher has accurately identified the need for a whole school framework for assessment to support teachers and learners to have a clear understanding of planning next steps in learning. The headteacher and staff should review approaches to forward planning to ensure assessment is an integral part of this process. As the school reviews its curriculum rationale it will be a helpful development to re-visit national guidance for Curriculum for Excellence.
- There are regular opportunities for informal professional dialogue to plan lessons across the stages. Staff recognise the need to increase moderation activity across the school to raise standards and attainment. There is scope for more regular outward-looking engagement at cluster and local authority levels to help teachers develop their shared understanding of standards. This will increase the reliability of teachers' professional judgement when assessing children's progress and achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level.
- Staff are at a very early stage in tracking learners' progress in literacy and numeracy. There is scope to develop these approaches and to include other curricular areas. Teachers meet fortnightly to discuss the progress of individual children. Where a concern is identified, appropriate interventions are agreed and implemented. The impact of interventions is systematically reviewed and evaluated through regular updating of individualised educational programmes. Teachers have identified the need to review aspects of their planning in order to develop progression in learning through Curriculum for Excellence levels across the curriculum and to ensure breadth and depth.

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

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Most children are making satisfactory progress and a few are making good progress. Most who have additional support needs are making appropriate progress and achieving success. Information provided by the school, is beginning to reflect accurately the Curriculum for Excellence levels achieved by children. Overall, the majority of children are achieving expected levels of attainment. The school needs to ensure all children are achieving levels that are aligned to their capabilities through increased challenge in learning.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall attainment in literacy and English is satisfactory. Across the school, the majority of children including those who have additional support needs, are making expected progress. By the end of the early level and second level most children are making satisfactory progress across all aspects of literacy. The majority of children at first level are making good progress. There is scope for pace and challenge to be increased, and expectations of what children are capable of achieving, raised across the school.

Listening and talking

- Most children are making satisfactory progress in talking and listening. Across the school children listen well to instructions from their teachers and answer questions directed to them. At the early level, children listen to and follow instructions independently. At first level, they communicate clearly when asked to contribute to whole class lessons. They contribute their thoughts appropriately but are not yet skilled in turn taking and eye contact when sharing their ideas and opinions cooperatively with one another. By second level, children are becoming confident when sharing their interests and giving presentations. They are confident when talking to adults and responding to questions from teachers. There is headroom for children to develop the skills of building on one another's ideas.

Reading

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in reading. By the end of early level most children use their knowledge of sounds to attempt to read new words. At first and second level, most children use text and illustrations to identify the main idea of what they read. Children are developing confidence in using punctuation to read with expression. At second level children are motivated to read with younger children. Identified children are supported to develop their confidence in reading through paired reading programmes. To further encourage reading for enjoyment and to give children opportunities to make informed personal choices about what they'd like to read, the school should review the use published reading schemes to ensure texts match the needs of all children.

Writing

- Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress in writing. At the early level, children create stories with an adult as scribe. They copy simple sentences and form the majority of letters accurately. At first level, most children write with increased awareness of sentence structure, basic punctuation and connectives. By the end of second level, children write extended pieces of text and demonstrate a good understanding of the structure of varied genre. They use digital technologies to present writing and engage the reader through attractive layout. Overall, children would benefit from more regular and consistent feedback about their writing and how to achieve success. They are not yet sufficiently skilled in applying writing skills to a wide range of relevant contexts.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. The headteacher and staff are carefully identifying the gaps children have in their learning so that they can build on prior learning and ensure a smooth progression in Curriculum for Excellence. Across the school, the majority of children are achieving expected levels of attainment. The targeted interventions in place ensure that children who require additional support make appropriate progress with their learning in numeracy and mathematics.

Number, money and measurement

- At the early level, all children count and record numbers to 20. They are beginning to count backwards with confidence and gain accuracy in adding numbers up to ten. They order days of the week and understand the time sequences of their day with confidence. At first level, all children are becoming confident in mental maths calculations to add and subtract two-digit numbers and apply multiplication strategies. Children's understanding of measurement using standard units of length and weight is developing well through real life contexts. Most children tell the time in half hours using both analogue and digital clocks. By second level, most children work well with a range of three digit whole numbers. They link their knowledge of measuring well to other curricular areas. The school should continue to ensure children progress in all aspects of numeracy without gaps in their learning.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, all children name common 2D shapes with confidence. At first level, all children recognise 2D shapes and those with right angles. They are developing mathematical language to name and describe 3D objects. By second level, most children understand lines of symmetry and describe the properties of 2D shapes. By second level, most children use mirrors well when working with a variety of shapes and identifying lines of symmetry. They can plot coordinates on squared paper to form shapes and patterns. The programme for these aspects of children's learning need to ensure children build continuously on prior learning.

Information handling

- Overall children are developing progressive skills in representing information in a variety of forms. At the early level, all children sort objects into sets and draw simple diagrams to sort everyday objects. They use information about eye colour to create simple charts. At first level, all children use tally marks to gather information and present this as bar graphs. They interpret information in tables, charts and bar graphs. Staff recognise that further work is needed to ensure all children display information on graphs with increased accuracy. By second level, most children are developing confidence when investigating, collating and organising information using a variety of pie charts, bar graphs and diagrams.

Attainment over time

- Teachers know individual children well. They use a range of standardised and national assessment information to identify supportive interventions. A range of assessment information is gathered on reading, writing, and numeracy. There is headroom to increase opportunities for

professional dialogue and increase consistency in staff confidence when making robust judgement. The headteacher and staff should continue to focus on working collegially to strengthen a common understanding of standards and ensure children's progress is sustained effectively throughout the school. The headteacher has developed effective working relationships and teamwork amongst staff. They should support and challenge one another to develop clear expectations for all children and increase depth and challenge for the highest attaining children.

- Children are successful in a range of activities offered to them. Teachers recognise children's achievements in and beyond school through certificates and awards which are celebrated at assemblies and the school's 'big book'. There are opportunities through the Active School's initiative for a variety of taster sessions with other small rural schools and most recently cycling skills development at Bikeability sessions. Children's achievements are well supported by a range of partners including specialists in music, art and PE. Children have achieved local success in a number of competitions and creative events such as the Euroquiz, gymnastics, sculpture prize and film animations. Children are enthusiastic and proud to represent their school. They participate in the life of the school as junior road safety officers, organisers of excursions, performing for parents and bringing them to school for a day to share learning. Children are actively seeking ways to improve their school such as the mud kitchen area. There is scope to further involve children in the school's self-evaluation processes.
- Staff know children and their families well. A range of appropriate strategies and resources are targeted well to support children with additional support needs in making appropriate progress. These interventions are well planned and regularly reviewed to ensure a positive impact for children. Safe and nurturing spaces are used well for children who have barriers to their learning. This is allowing children to discuss their feelings and develop strategies to apply in other learning environments. Staff and children indicate this is having a positive impact on children's resilience and readiness to learn. The school should now build its evidence of attainment over time and ensure all children are making the best possible progress.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

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|-------------------------|---------------|
| 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.