

Summarised inspection findings

Banavie Primary School

The Highland Council

14 February 2023

Key contextual information

Banavie Primary School serves a wide area to the north of Fort William. The majority of children live in Banavie and Corpach and the catchment stretches from Erracht to Glenfinnan and around Loch Eil to Achaphubuil. A few children have extended travel to and from school each day. At the time of inspection, there were 119 children on the school roll. Children are taught across five classes. Most children live in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zones 7 to 10. The school has identified that an area of new housing is awaiting SIMD classification. The incomplete data makes it challenging to precisely define the poverty-related attainment gap. Across the primary stages, just over one quarter of children require additional support for learning.

There have been changes in the senior leadership team this academic year. Three weeks before the inspection, the headteacher took up a seconded post within the education authority central team. One of the school's two principal teachers has taken on the role of acting headteacher. The acting headteacher and principal teacher each have significant teaching commitments.

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

- The culture of Banavie Primary School is very welcoming and inclusive. Children are very proud of their achievements and of each other. They demonstrate kindness in the playground, as they play happily together across the different age groups. Staff, parents and children were involved fully in developing the school values, 'Bee kind; Bee responsible; Bee awesome'. The values are rooted in the school's very well embedded work on sustainability. Children are working towards their seventh Eco Schools Scotland green flag award. Staff and children refer to the values naturally as part of school life. Children value the history of their community, for example, through the house system which is based on the names of ancient Lochaber clans.
- Staff are taking forward a rights-based approach to learning within an accredited scheme. Children are polite and respectful to each other, and to adults and visitors to the school. They are developing well as confident and responsible citizens.
- Staff provide all children with opportunities to contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community through worthwhile leadership roles. Children participate in working groups, such as the pupil council, eco committee and newspaper group. Each working group produces an action plan that is based on children's views. This is helping to develop children's teamwork, communication and organisational skills.
- Across the school, most children are engaged, motivated and interact well during lessons and activities. Most children understand the purpose of their learning. Children exercise some choice in their learning, such as helping to shape topics and themes and the books they read.

From P4 onwards, each child has a dedicated digital device and, overall, these are used well to support their learning. The school have rightly identified that embedding digital technology to enhance learning and teaching is an area for further development. The established garden beds are well used by children in the eco committee. A focus in the last two years on outdoor learning, delivered by Outward Bound staff, was very popular with children of all ages. Children learned skills in orienteering, teamwork and bushcraft. This approach could now be developed further, utilising the unique, rich learning contexts the school's outdoor environment provides.

- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good, with a few examples of very good practice. At times, children's engagement is variable. In a few lessons, teachers need to build more differentiation into their planning to meet fully the needs of all learners. Teachers should work together to consider how to increase the pace and challenge in learning for high-achieving children.
- At the early and first levels, staff are starting to develop playful pedagogy. Senior leaders and staff should now focus on the development of learning through play using national guidance *Realising the Ambition: Being Me* (2020). There is good practice and expertise within the staff team to support teachers to better plan spaces, experiences and interactions.
- The learning environment is built on nurturing and positive relationships, which in turn, lead to positive learning outcomes for children. In all classes, there is a consistent commitment amongst staff to developing a literacy rich environment. Staff benefit from relevant professional learning to improve learning and teaching, and this is impacting positively on children's progress. This is particularly evident in writing, where a new approach is leading to accelerated progress for targeted cohorts of children. Most children know themselves well as learners and can talk about their strengths and next steps.
- Assessment is integral to the planning of learning and teaching. Staff have developed a whole school assessment strategy. This includes an assessment, moderation and reporting framework that clearly outlines the range and timing of assessments used across the school. Teachers use an increasing range of assessment evidence to support their professional judgements and plan for next steps. In the most effective lessons, teachers ensure that assessment approaches are matched closely to the various learning needs of children. Assessment for learning strategies are consistently used almost all classes. Staff are embedding strategies for self, peer and teacher assessment which provide effective feedback for children and suggested next steps in learning. As result, children are aware of their individual targets. Staff capture well the breadth of learning regularly in 'learning snapshots' which are shared with families. Parents would like to also have more regular updates on how well their children are progressing.
- Teachers engage very well in moderation with colleagues within the school. They collaboratively plan and deliver lessons and assessments and use these to moderate standards within the school. They have started to re-engage with colleagues across the local schools cluster, with a focus on moderating standards in writing. This is helping staff to become more confident in their professional judgements in literacy.
- Teachers make effective use of helpful local authority progressive frameworks to assess children's progress in numeracy. They make good use of diagnostic information from Scottish National Standardised Assessments and other assessments to support their professional judgement.
- Senior leaders and teachers make very effective use of a local authority online tracking system. This supports school leaders and staff to monitor children's progress throughout the

school year and to set specific targets for all children. As a result, all staff have a shared overview of the progress of all children across the school within literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders use this information well to discuss with staff the progress of individual children, groups and cohorts, including those most affected by socio-economic circumstances.

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

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

- Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good, with most children achieving, or on track to achieve, expected levels. The significant numbers of children who require additional support are making good progress towards their individual specific learning targets.

Attainment in literacy and English

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

Listening and talking

- Overall, children are making good progress in listening and talking. Almost all children listen well and engage in conversation with adults and peers during learning and can respond to the ideas of others respectfully. At the early level, most children take turns during class discussions. A few children require support to share their views during group tasks. Children at the early level should continue to be supported to build their communication skills and expand their vocabulary through play. At first and second levels, children build on the opinions and views of others during group work.

Reading

- Overall, children are making good progress in reading. They use their class libraries, and the well-resourced community library van on a regular basis to choose books for reading for enjoyment. At the early level, a majority of children recognise familiar single sounds confidently. Most children at the early level use pictorial clues to retell familiar stories and predict what might happen next. At first level, most children read fluently. They confidently discuss characters, setting and summarise the main ideas from a known text. At second level, almost all children generate and answer increasingly challenging questions about their class novel. They know how to skim and scan a range of texts to identify the main ideas. Children across the school now need to explore a wider range of texts, including non-fiction. This should deepen and extend their good knowledge and understanding of author style and their own reading preferences.

Writing

- Overall, children are making good progress in writing. Staff are starting to close significant gaps in learning that arose because of the impact of COVID-19. A minority of children working towards the early level form letters correctly and use capital letters and full stops accurately. A minority can write a few simple sentences independently. There is scope for more children at the early level to be making brisker progress. At first level, most children write well across a range of genre. They use vocabulary to engage the reader and organise their writing using paragraphs. At second level, the majority of children write well across a range of genre. They

use increasingly complex sentences and a few use a wide range of punctuation to capture and maintain the reader's interest. A new approach to developing writing has been introduced using story maps and pictorial prompts to support creativity. There is early evidence to show that this is having a positive impact on the quality and quantity of children's writing. Commendably, children in the newspaper group apply their skills to write articles for the monthly edition of the local community newsletter. Across the school, children should continue to be given opportunities to apply their learning across the curriculum and in real-life contexts.

Numeracy and mathematics

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

Number, money and measure

- By the end of early level, most children are confident using addition and subtraction and can count accurately forwards and backwards in sequence to 20 and beyond. A few can count in twos and in fives. They need to be further challenged to extend and apply their numeracy skills in a range of contexts, including through play. At first and second levels, most children demonstrate brisk mental agility appropriate for their stage. Almost all carry out calculations confidently and accurately. Children would benefit from further practice with multi-step word problems. At first level, most children confidently round to the nearest ten and hundred, convert between pounds and pence and can apply estimation skills well. They are confident in working with fractions. At second level, children apply their learning and skills in number, money and measure to real-life, practical contexts. Almost all confidently convert fractions, decimals and percentages. A next step is for children to explore financial education, such as the differences between debit and credit cards and working within a budget.

Shape, position and movement

- By the end of the early level, most children identify two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At first level, most children name an increasing range of two-dimensional shapes and use the appropriate vocabulary of position and movement when describing the location of items in relation to one another. Most can describe the properties or different types of angles. At second level, almost all children are accurate working with symmetry, compass points and co-ordinates. They need to develop further their understanding of the properties of circles, such as circumference, diameter and radius. They can confidently calculate the area and perimeter of quadrilaterals.

Information handling

- At the early level, most children confidently sort items and are growing in confidence using simple pictographs. Across first and second levels, most children use key skills in information handling well to discuss how they would carry out a simple survey. For example, they use tally marks, simple graphs and pie charts to present and interpret information. Most are confident with methods used to gather and classify information. Children working at second level demonstrate clear understanding of the concepts of certainty and chance.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders have gathered and analysed data for over five years. Overall, children's good attainment levels in numeracy, reading, and listening and talking have remained steady over this period. Senior leaders and staff identified that children's attainment decreased post-pandemic, with writing being particularly impacted. Working together, senior leaders and staff have identified and understand the reasons for this dip in attainment for particular cohorts. They are implementing targeted action, for example, at first level. This session, staff have a clear focus on improving children's attainment in writing. Senior leaders and staff should continue to monitor and track the attainment of individuals, cohorts and groups of children to further raise attainment.

Overall quality of learner's achievements

- Children across the school are developing citizenship skills well through worthwhile groups such as the pupil council, eco committee and newspaper group. Older children speak enthusiastically about school leadership responsibilities, such as being house captains and buddies. They are rightly proud of their valuable contributions to the life of the school. A residential trip for children at P7 develops their skills in independence, resilience and communication. Prior to the pandemic, most children were involved in a range of trips, events and clubs. Children are benefitting from these as they are increasingly re-established. A few children in the upper stages receive free specialist musical instrument tuition. Staff encourage children to have healthy lifestyles. This is promoted very well through teachers' work with High Life Highland, visits from police officers and through the introduction of food technology lessons. Children's many significant individual successes and achievements out with school are recognised and celebrated during assemblies and through displays and digital platforms.
- Teachers should continue to develop systems to track children's participation in school clubs and wider activities. This will allow them to identify and support children who may be at risk of missing out. Staff should also support all children to identify the attributes and skills they develop through participation in wider achievement activities. This will support children further as they set and evaluate their learning targets, and develop transferable skills for learning, life and the world of work.

Equity for all learners

- The school's data demonstrates that staff are making good progress in reducing the socio-economic attainment gap. Senior leaders use the small Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) allocation appropriately to support the strategy for raising attainment in literacy and numeracy. Staff identify barriers to learning that result in attainment gaps using a range of appropriate data. They use this information to plan interventions to successfully address these gaps. Funding is used for additional staffing and to purchase resources to support children in their learning. Staff can demonstrate that PEF interventions are raising attainment for most targeted pupils in literacy and numeracy. In line with The Highland Council's approaches, senior leaders use an annual standardised assessment to assess children's wellbeing. They use this information effectively to identify areas of the health and wellbeing curriculum for teachers to focus on with all children. They also identify where targeted health and wellbeing support for individual children, such as nurture approaches, would be beneficial. These supports are leading to better outcomes for children.
- Senior leaders have arrangements in place to ensure that financial constraints do not prevent any children from taking part in opportunities for wider achievement. Children across the school demonstrate empathy and understanding, as they discuss in classes the challenges that some families face. Children at P2 and P3 are raising funds for the local foodbank, whilst applying their literacy and numeracy skills, through their successful Christmas Post enterprise project.

Other relevant evidence

- The school has recently consulted parents and children on homework. There are mixed views amongst the school community about the purpose, quantity, timing and value of home learning tasks. Staff should continue to work with children and families to develop a clear rationale and flexible approach to homework, which aims to meet the needs and aspirations of all.

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.