

# Summarised inspection findings

**Kennethmont School**

Aberdeenshire Council

28 November 2023

## Key contextual information

Kennethmont primary school is a three class primary school in rural Aberdeenshire. The school is situated in the small village community of Kennethmont, close to Huntly. At the time of inspection, the school roll was 65 children. The roll has increased in size considerably over the past four years, as a result of a neighbouring school being mothballed. The headteacher has been in post for over six years and retains a weekly teaching commitment. She is supported by three class teachers.

In September 2022, no pupils lived in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. The majority (57.7%) of pupils live in the 40% least deprived datazones in Scotland.

In September 2022 the school reported that 42% of pupils had additional support needs.

### 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 and children across the school enjoy respectful relationships. Children are happy and friendly and are keen to be challenged in their learning. Children across the three mixed stage classes work well together to support each other in their learning. The school values of trust, included, courage and kindness (TICK), are displayed well around the school. All children would benefit from more regular discussion using the values in their day to day interactions, to develop their readiness to learn.
- Most children carry out their work well as directed by the teacher. There is natural scope in these mixed stage classes to encourage much more of an environment for children to lead aspects of their learning. Almost all children would benefit from having more planned independence in their learning. In literacy and numeracy across the school, learning is well-matched to the needs of the majority of learners. A minority of learners at all stages require further support through planned differentiation in their learning. A minority of learners across the stages require and would relish, much more challenge in their learning. Teachers need to plan tasks and activities that meet the different needs and abilities of all learners consistently.
- Most children are enthusiastic learners. Teachers should engage with colleagues beyond the school to find examples of highly effective learning and teaching. This will help them to embed more effective practice in engaging and motivating children in a small, multi-stage class setting.
- In most lessons across the school, teachers provide instructions for children which are clear. This helps children to access tasks and activities. In a few examples, teachers use skilled questioning to develop children's curiosity for learning and to challenge their thinking. Teachers now need to adopt and embed this effective practice across all lessons. In most lessons,

children receive a variety of feedback to help them understand their strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers should now develop a consistent, whole-school approach to providing high quality feedback. They should also create opportunities to communicate informal feedback to parents on their child's learning and achievements.

- Currently, the school is undergoing a refresh of its digital technology infrastructure. As a result, children do not currently benefit from well-embedded digital technology to enhance their everyday learning experiences.
- At the early level, teachers are starting to develop opportunities for play to support learning in literacy and numeracy. Areas of the classroom have been organised well to encourage more independent learning at the early stages. Most children working at the beginning of first level are able to select and use resources with confidence. They would benefit from an increased emphasis on the development of their listening, talking and creative skills through play. Staff should continue to engage with national practice guidance and research to develop further their understanding of play pedagogy. This will help them to strengthen learning across the curriculum and to develop clarity about their role in facilitating learning through play.
- The headteacher and teachers are currently developing plans to embed outdoor learning as an integral part of the curriculum across all stages. The majority of children benefit from outdoor learning experiences. Given the spacious outdoor environment adjoining the school, there is real potential to develop this as a well-planned, motivational learning environment for children to apply their learning in different, relevant contexts.
- Teachers use a range of assessment tools, including national standardised assessments, to support their professional judgements in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics. The headteacher tracks the progress of individual learners well, including those who need additional support with their learning. This is helping teachers to plan suitable support strategies for the majority of children to be successful at the appropriate national level in their learning. Teachers need to engage further in moderation activities that go beyond verifying assessment information. This will be most effective when engaging with colleagues beyond the school and cluster.
- The headteacher, along with teachers, monitors children's progress well at key reporting points to parents in the session. She monitors well the progress of children who require additional support to access their learning. There are well-developed tracking processes in place for literacy and numeracy at all stages. Staff should extend these to include tracking children's progress across all curriculum areas to help inform subsequent planning of learning, teaching and assessment. Teachers should work with colleagues beyond the school context to increase their knowledge and application of the National Benchmarks. Teachers' planning should show how individuals and groups of children can experience challenge and relevant application across all areas of learning. This will help to raise attainment, as well as children's motivation and engagement across all aspects of their learning.

## 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

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

### Attainment and progress in literacy and English

- There are small numbers of children across each stage of the composite and multi-composite classes. As a result, HM Inspectors have avoided the use of threshold statements at stages and levels to mitigate against potentially identifying individuals.
- The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English. A few children's progress is good and they are performing beyond expected national levels. Overall, most children are capable of making much better progress from prior levels of attainment.
- The majority of children are on track to meet expected levels in listening and talking. The majority of children express ideas clearly and can express opinions, backed up with reasons. A minority of children across the school would benefit from further guidance to develop skills in taking turns and expressing themselves well in conversations. A majority of children have recently had relevant opportunities to talk confidently in a range of situations and audiences. As a next step, more children would benefit from engaging in more planned opportunities to talk to a range of audiences. The majority of children's vocabulary is developing well. At early and first levels, a few children are refocusing on phonics and writing skills in order to improve their overall progress. By the end of the second level, children need more opportunities to read a wider range of texts for a variety of purposes. Most children require further opportunities to develop their skills in identifying author's literary techniques to engage readers and make texts more captivating. This in turn would help children to make better connections to improving their own writing. Overall, reading does not currently have a high profile across the school. This is holding back children's progress in their writing. The headteacher and teachers are planning to embed additional resources to improve children's progress and attainment in reading.

### Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, the majority of children's progress in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory.

### Number, money and measure

- Across the school, the majority of children are developing well their understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. At early level, children are working within the 0-20 range when recognising, ordering and counting. As a priority, teachers should plan to develop children's confidence in mental arithmetic at a faster pace. At first level, a minority of children can round numbers to the nearest 10 with confidence. A minority of children can round to the nearest 1,000 with confidence, at second level. Across the school children can record length and height with accuracy. They now need to become more confident with using and converting to larger measurements. At all levels children must develop a much better understanding of money and time in different contexts.

## Shape, position and movement

- Children at early and first levels can identify a range of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They can identify a few properties of shapes using mathematical terminology and they have explored some of these through tiling. At first level children describe, plot and follow grid references and can use directional language to plan a route. At second level, children understand the terminology of angles.

## Information handling

- Through planned play opportunities, children at early level are able to match and sort items in a variety of ways. At first and second levels, children are developing an understanding of recording data using a range of different graphs and charts. A minority of children can interrogate the data accurately and with confidence.

## Attainment over time

- Improving the quality of children's literacy, and specifically writing is a current area of the school's improvement work. There is evidence that recent interventions are slowly helping to improve children's writing across the stages. Overall, children's progress in literacy and numeracy is not developing at an appropriate pace across expected levels at each stage. Teachers should continue to engage with national standards and expectations around expected levels of achievement at each stage. This will help to improve children's progress in overall at a faster pace.
- All teachers have engaged with colleagues across the local cluster schools, to develop more robust approaches to moderation. The headteacher and teachers should create opportunities to strengthen their approaches to moderation to improve their judgement of children's achievement of a national level. Current data gathered by teachers to report children's overall achievement of a level does not match their abilities in literacy and numeracy.

## Overall quality of learners' achievements

- At all stages, most children achieve more widely beyond their class-based learning. As a result, these children develop a range of skills and capacities. Children are not yet able to recognise the benefits of their wider achievements or the skills they are developing. Staff should continue with plans to track the skills children are developing, both across the curriculum and through wider opportunities to learn.
- A limited range of partners support the development of children's skills through local events and activities. These include members of the Parent Council, who run the Bikeability sessions for the older children. Active Schools staff lead a block of stay and play sessions for younger learners. The school has created a partnership with a local organisation to increase all children's awareness of sustainability and gardening. The majority of children in the older class take part in after-school netball sessions run by parents. More recently, the team has taken part in local competitions. This has helped to build children's confidence and develop their listening and talking skills when reporting back to their peers about the event.
- Most children are confident learners. Older pupils are sometimes play leaders for the younger children which is helping to develop their confidence. They are now keen to build on this by taking more responsibility across the school and in their community. Overall, children do not yet have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills through wider learning experiences.
- A few children at the upper stages benefit from music tuition offered by the local authority.

## Equity for all learners

- The school received a small amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) last session. The headteacher has used the funding to upgrade technology across the school, as well as develop further the development of outdoor learning. This should help to enhance children's everyday learning experiences through digital technology. The Parent Council is active in raising funds for the school and has used these to subsidise outings and reduce the cost for parents. They are keen now to work in partnership with the school to identify funding priorities based on the needs of the children and families they are serving. This would also provide a rich context for introducing meaningful pupil leadership across the school.
- The headteacher and staff should consider addressing the cost of the school day explicitly. This will ensure access to opportunities for all children.
- As a result of the school's SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) profile, staff have identified that there is no overriding attainment gap as a result of socio-economic disadvantage.

## 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.