

Summarised inspection findings

Grantown Primary School

The Highland Council

4 December 2018

Key contextual information

In the previous five years the school has had several changes at senior leadership levels. Currently the headteacher, depute headteacher and principal teacher are all acting posts which began in August 2018.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

weak

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 recognise the need to continue to promote positive behaviour and respect in all aspects of school life. While positive relationships between children and staff are evident in classes, current approaches are not impacting sufficiently on the continuous development of mutually respectful relationships which value all members of the school community. The school has introduced a number of interventions focused on too many varied aspects of supporting the school's ethos and culture. The lack of focus and direction has therefore not improved the ethos of the school. The senior leadership team should lead the development of children's rights and responsibilities, ensuring this leads to improving the curriculum and work of the school.
- Overall, learning is overly teacher led with not enough opportunities for children to exercise choice and responsibility. The majority of children follow instructions well and complete tasks and activities independently when these are set by the teacher. In numeracy and reading, teachers differentiate learning for groups of learners. In a few lessons, pace and challenge are appropriate. However, learning is not sufficiently challenging and this is having a negative impact on the pace of learning and impeding appropriate progress for children. There is considerable scope for staff to have higher aspirations and shared understanding of what most children are capable of achieving.
- Across the school, staff share learning intentions with children at the start of each lesson. However, children are not always clear about the purpose of their learning. They talk about the task they are doing, but not what they are learning. In many instances the success criteria are a restatement of the learning intentions, linked to the completion of the task. There is considerable scope to involve children in co-constructing meaningful success criteria to enhance their understanding and ownership of their learning.
- Teachers should continue to develop approaches to engage children in reflection about their learning and planning next steps. This development should be supported through appropriate professional learning for all staff. In the majority of classes, teachers provide helpful feedback to children about their learning, but this is not yet of a consistently high quality. All feedback, including written feedback, should focus on children's learning and what they need to do to improve. Greater consistency in the use of plenaries at the end of lessons will improve children's understanding of what they have learned and their next steps. At present, most

children do not talk confidently about their own learning. The school should continue with plans to ensure children have more awareness of themselves as learners and what they need to do to improve. Children need many more opportunities to lead and take responsibility for their own learning.

- In a few classes, teachers use skilled questioning to develop learning. However, in most lessons, questioning only tests understanding and recall. Senior leaders should ensure that all staff have regular opportunities within and outwith the school to build on existing good practice, for example where questioning develops higher order thinking skills. This will help promote greater consistency across stages. There are not yet systematic approaches which promote the sharing of existing effective practice in learning, teaching and assessment across the school. A planned approach, led by senior leaders, which supports staff understanding of the features of effective learning and teaching will help to develop a consistent approach to the promotion of high quality learning across the school.
- The school is beginning to increase its use of digital technology. A few teachers make use of apps to share learning with parents and carers. However, there is scope to develop a whole school approach to the use of digital technology to support children's learning.
- Staff now need to develop an agreed whole-school approach to assessment, which consistently evidences breadth, challenge and application of learning. This will help teachers by widening the range of evidence they use to make robust professional judgements about children's progress, supported by appropriate professional learning. Teachers are at the early stages of planning assessment as part of learning and teaching. Staff have made a recent start to developing more holistic assessments in writing, linked more closely to planned learning and teaching. Staff need to better align assessment to the needs of all children, particularly those who face barriers to their learning.
- Teachers plan a broad curriculum and make use of local authority progression frameworks for literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders should take steps to ensure planning is as meaningful as possible, avoids unnecessary bureaucracy and is informed by assessment and children's prior learning. Both senior leaders and staff should therefore take steps to streamline planning for learning, taking account of groups of children and planning according to their needs and progress. Senior leaders should provide clearer leadership to ensure individualised educational programmes are considered for care experienced children and those with identified needs.
- Teachers have recently engaged with National Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy. They should continue with their plans to deepen their understanding of national standards to support planning for progression in learning and to make more robust assessments of children's progress. This will support more rigour in approaches to tracking the progress children are making. Regular professional dialogue will support and challenge teachers in their judgements. Teachers do not currently discuss children's progress in learning with members of the senior leadership team on a planned, regular basis and would welcome opportunities to do so. Currently the tracking system does not provide a clear overview of all children, their needs and their progress in 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 that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

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 is at an early stage in using data and its analysis to inform how well new initiatives are impacting on raising attainment. Overall, too many children are making insufficient progress. Data provided by the school is not reliable enough, as the information used to measure children's progress is not systematic. There is a need to continue to improve approaches to assessment and tracking of progress to support teachers' professional judgement about how well children are achieving Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels.
- Teachers have made a recent start to developing key assessment tasks for individuals in both literacy and numeracy. These assessment tasks should continue to be reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. There is a need to focus closely on the pace of learning within lessons and throughout the progression pathways. Further development of assessment with increased breadth and application will support more confident and robust teacher judgements. Staff work collegiately and support one another well. There is an urgent need for increased professional dialogue between senior leaders and teachers to raise expectations and track and monitor the progress of learners.

Attainment in literacy

Reading

- Overall, attainment in reading is satisfactory. Across the school, children enjoy reading and making personal choices about what they like to read. At early level, the majority of children are beginning to use their knowledge of sounds and letters to read words. At first level, children talk confidently about character and setting. At second level, children talk about the strategies of skimming and scanning. At first and second levels, children read familiar texts, attempting to add expression. However, across first and second level, children require more challenge to enable them to engage at a deeper level of understanding with texts. The use of higher order reading skills and the specific teaching of reading strategies using a wider range of texts, should be reinforced across the school.

Writing

- Overall attainment in writing is satisfactory. Children write for a variety of purposes. However, across first and second level, children do not yet write extended pieces regularly enough. The school recognises the need to improve its approaches to spelling and standards of presentation. At early level, the majority of children use a pencil with increasing control and confidence and attempt to form letters legibly. They add detail to pictures to help them share experiences or information. The majority of children are starting to attempt to use capital letters and full stops. At first level, the majority of children make simple plans for writing and

write independently. They punctuate most sentences accurately. At second level, the majority of children engage the reader with their use of vocabulary. Children would benefit from opportunities to review and assess writing to ensure writing is technically accurate and meets its purpose

Listening and talking

- Attainment in listening and talking is satisfactory. At early level, the majority of children listen well and respond to questions from others. They recount key information from experiences and follow instructions. Children at first level are beginning to talk about texts and share their thoughts. They are developing skills in turn taking and responding appropriately in group situations. Children at second level listen to, and build on, the contributions of others by clarifying or supporting their views. The implementation of progression pathways in talking and listening will help children develop further their skills in talking and listening.

Attainment in numeracy

- Overall, attainment in numeracy is weak. The majority of children are confident in written calculations, place value and basic addition. Across the school, they make satisfactory progress in mental agility. The majority of children are developing confidence in describing the strategies they use to make accurate calculations. However, children are less skilled at applying their numeracy skills across their learning in new contexts. Staff recognise the need to ensure children learn progressively and without gaps in their learning. Staff should continue to develop the use of diagnostic testing as part of their approach to numeracy planning and assessment. They should take steps to revisit prior learning more regularly across the CfE numeracy and mathematics organisers to ensure children make better progress

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children count and order numbers within 10. A few are becoming independent in applying their knowledge of numeracy in the context of games. At first level, the majority of children make addition calculations accurately and write two digit numbers. They know numbers before and after when counting on and back using a number line. They recognise numbers across a hundred square. Orally, they recite numbers to 100 by adding on ten. They are less confident in estimating measurements and telling time on an analogue clock. By second level, most children are confident in mental calculations using the nine multiplication table. They set themselves challenges to increase their speed of recall and through making number patterns of the associated law. A few describe the strategies they use to make mental calculations with confidence.

Information handling

- Across the school, children make simple bar charts. They are not yet sufficiently skilled in using digital technologies to present information in a variety of diagrams, tables and graphs.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early level, children recognise a variety of simple two dimensional shapes. At first level, they develop a knowledge of a wider range of two dimensional shapes but are less confident about identifying three dimensional objects. By second level, children know properties of common two dimensional shapes and three dimensional objects.

Attainment over time

- Data provided by the school from 2016 to 2017, shows that at early, first and second level fewer than half the children attained expected CfE levels in numeracy. By the end of session

2017 to 2018, the majority of children had achieved expected levels. Overall, the majority of children are achieving expected CfE levels in literacy. However, there is considerable scope for more children to be achieving second level by the end of P7 in reading, writing, talking and listening and numeracy. Improvement priorities now need to lead to raising attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- There are a range of opportunities within the school for children to develop the four capacities of CfE. The school celebrates and recognises the achievements of children at school assemblies and on displays around the school. Commendably, many children achieve great success in the South Highland Schools Athletics Association. Parents provide wider experiences for children through the Shinty club. Children at P7 gain leadership skills through a residential experience and as sports leaders. Many clubs are on offer to children and the school should ensure these are available to all. There is scope for children to be given greater opportunities to lead and have a greater voice within the school. This will support children to be more actively engaged in leading learning, and continue to build their independence and confidence.
- Children's learning is enhanced by a range of partnerships. The promotion of physical activities and physical education is a strength and children's performance in sporting events and lessons is recorded, then used to discuss areas of strengths and improvements over time, across a level. Digital profiling is beginning to be used in some classes to share activities and achievements and build on communication and the sharing of learning with parents.

Equity for all learners

- The school does not currently have in place systems to promote equity of success. Senior leaders should now develop clear guidance and systems to ensure the needs of all children are met through well-focused planning for learning. Staff are at the early stages of using data with confidence and have begun looking at how best to support all children in, for example, the development of numeracy skills.
- There is a need to develop the tracking and monitoring of children's achievements to ensure all children have the opportunity to experience success and to celebrate children's achievements, both within and out with school. Improving approaches to profiling will identify and with planned action, reduce barriers to participation.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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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