

Summarised inspection findings

Crimond School

Aberdeenshire Council

23 April 2019

Key contextual information

Crimond School serves the village of Crimond and the surrounding rural area. The school accommodation, a former junior secondary school, provides spacious classrooms and open areas. At the time of the inspection, there were 81 primary-aged children on the school roll. Due to local recruitment challenges, there has been significant change within the staff team in recent years.

1.3 Leadership of change

good

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

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

- The headteacher has a clear vision for Crimond School, as a caring school community, who are 'growing together, learning together and achieving together'. Recently, staff, parents and children have worked together to review and refresh the school values. These values are explored and reinforced by staff and children in classes and at assemblies. Children demonstrate the values of trust, respect, care, working together, responsibility, courage and achievement, through their interactions with each other in daily school life.
- Teaching and support staff make valuable contributions to school life. Increasingly as a new team, they are helping to shape school improvement. Many teachers willingly take on responsibility for leading aspects of the curriculum. They appreciate opportunities to collaborate with each other and to share practice with colleagues in other schools. The school should continue to build on this outward looking approach, to help staff to identify further improvements, and to explore best practice in similar school settings.
- The experienced and dedicated headteacher is highly regarded by the school community. She places high priority on supporting and nurturing children and families. She ensures that the school plays a central role in the local community. Staff are very knowledgeable about the socio-economic context of the area that the school serves and the challenges that living in a rural area can bring for families. The very positive and caring approach taken by the headteacher ensures an inclusive ethos across the school, with a warm, family feel.
- During her time in post, the headteacher has developed effective approaches for self-evaluation. Along with staff, she uses 'How Good is Our School? (4th edition)' in a focused way to reflect on aspects of the school's work. She carries out a range of activities to monitor the quality of children's experiences, including observations of classroom practice and sampling children's work. She uses data about each child's progress well, to inform where intervention may be required. As a result, the headteacher is able to make sound judgements about the standards of children's learning and about the overall quality of provision and outcomes for learners.
- The headteacher and staff use their collective knowledge of children, alongside the range of available data they have, to identify priorities for future improvement. The priorities within the

current improvement plan focus clearly on continuing to raise attainment. Through well-planned interventions, the school can demonstrate success in how approaches to the teaching of reading, writing and numeracy have recently improved. A new approach to improving children's mental wellbeing, confidence and resilience is having a positive impact on their attitudes to learning and their ability to work co-operatively with their peers. Staff have identified the need to further develop approaches to teaching writing, and to developing other curricular areas in a systematic way.

- Through regular professional dialogue, the headteacher and staff have planned opportunities to identify and take forward improvements. Staff engage together in professional reading, and try out new approaches and teaching techniques in their classes. As planned, staff should continue to work together to share and embed best practice in pedagogy across the school.
- All children from P1 to P7 take part in a range of pupil voice groups. These include the pupil council, eco committee and groups that focus on health and wellbeing, children's rights and citizenship. Increasingly, children have opportunities to make decisions about, and are beginning to influence, aspects of their school experience. As the school has identified, there is scope to involve children more in evaluative activities, such as reviewing learning experiences and new approaches and developments. The headteacher has plans in place to continue to explore creative ways to ensure parents and partners can contribute more fully to the agenda for change.
- The headteacher and staff have used the school's allocation of the Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) in a considered and targeted way. This includes providing additional staffing, resources and expertise to help improve children's resilience and mental and emotional wellbeing. The school can demonstrate the impact of this through children's improved focus in classes, and in the significant reduction of teachers' referrals for extra pastoral support for children.

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 headteacher and staff have created a positive, calm learning environment that reflects the school's vision and values. Across the school, children are polite, mannerly, and talk about their school with pride. Almost all children are engaged and interested in their learning. Children interact well with staff and each other and they demonstrate high standards of behaviour in class. Children are consulted regularly and their views are sought in a range of ways. Almost all children feel their views and opinions are valued and most can give examples of when their suggestions have been acted upon.
- Most children are confident and contribute effectively to the life of the school and community. Crimond School features strongly in local community life. Members of the community and parents are involved in a range of school activities including expressive arts, sports and other cultural events. Local businesses also contribute to the curriculum, particularly through enterprise and world of work activities. As a result, children develop their learning through a variety of worthwhile contexts, real-life experiences and visits. The school plans to develop further the use of local woodland areas to further enhance children's learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. Teachers are organised and well prepared. In classes where cooperative learning approaches are implemented, children are developing the skills to collaborate in groups and share their learning with peers. In most lessons, learning experiences are well matched to meet the needs of most children. Differentiation is provided through adult support and varying activities. In almost all lessons observed, support staff were deployed well to provide effective assistance for children who need additional support. The school has identified the need to increase the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for high-achieving children. There is scope to increase children's independence and responsibility. Children would benefit from leading their own learning more consistently across the school.
- Teachers make effective use of learning intentions and success criteria in most lessons. In the best examples, success criteria are co-created with children. There is scope to share this good practice across the school, to better support children's own self-assessment. Almost all children are offered opportunities during learning to self-assess their work, particularly in writing. A next step is to provide children with opportunities for peer assessment. All teachers provide children with a range of verbal and written feedback to help them understand their progress in learning. Where written feedback is most effective, it focuses on children's strengths and is clear on what they need to do next in their learning to improve. The school should continue to plan opportunities for teachers to share practice to ensure consistency in the quality of feedback provided to children.
- Teachers and support staff make good use of questioning to encourage children to think and to explain their learning. In classes where skilled questioning features, this provides opportunities

for children to develop their higher-order thinking skills. As planned, teachers should continue to share practice and observe one another to support the embedding of effective questioning across the school.

- Overall, teachers use a variety of teaching approaches well to motivate and engage children in their learning. In almost all classes, learning is enriched and supported by the effective use of digital technologies, including programmable toys, tablets and laptops. Children access online games and programmes, both in school and at home, to support learning in literacy and numeracy. Through a visiting specialist teacher, coding is being explored across first and second level to develop and enhance children's computational skills. Children speak positively about how digital learning enhances their learning experiences, motivation and enjoyment. The school is well placed to continue to extend the use of digital technology.
- Teachers make use of a range of formative and summative assessment approaches to inform their planning and to measure children's progress. The school should continue with plans to further develop holistic assessments as an integral part of learning and teaching. This will provide additional evidence of children's progress and enhance the assessment data currently available.
- Teachers benefit from opportunities to share their understanding of what achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels look like, and are developing their use of National Benchmarks. They take part in opportunities for moderation, both with colleagues in school and across the cluster. This is leading to increasing reliability and confidence in teachers' professional judgements.
- Teachers plan together to ensure children's learning is progressive and coherent. The curriculum design principles are used well as a focus for discussion between staff and the headteacher. Steps have been taken to reduce bureaucracy, making teachers' planning manageable. Staff should continue to refine and develop their processes for evaluation of learning and teaching. The children's use of learning logs is beginning to encourage reflection of themselves as learners. The school is considering opportunities within this approach for children to set personal targets and plan their next steps in learning.
- Teachers meet with the headteacher three times a year to review and discuss children's progress in learning and to identify interventions for individuals and/or groups. Staff also discuss any specific issues relating to children's wellbeing and development. The headteacher maintains a robust overview of children's attainment across the school, and can track different groups of children effectively. Professional learning opportunities are arranged to build teachers' confidence in analysing and interpreting assessment data and this should continue to be strengthened further.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Led by the headteacher, the school has recently refreshed the approaches for planning learning. The revised, whole-school guidance provides a clear structure for teachers, based on the four contexts for learning, the entitlements, and the design principles of Curriculum for Excellence. As a result, children across the school benefit from opportunities for personalisation, choice and enjoyment in their day-to-day learning. We agree with staff that they should continue to share best practice to ensure that children at all stages are appropriately challenged in their learning.
- The school has recently made good progress in reviewing and updating their curriculum rationale. The headteacher recognises that this provides a valuable opportunity for the school and its partners to reflect and celebrate the rich heritage and unique context of the local community. Staff use the experiences and outcomes to ensure children receive a broad curriculum across the school year. Teachers frequently plan together to share ideas and to ensure a consistency of approach. The headteacher maintains a careful overview of interdisciplinary themes and topics covered, in order to ensure appropriate coverage, breadth, depth and progression in learning across the school, over time.
- Staff use learning pathways, provided by Aberdeenshire Council, to plan for all curricular areas, including the key areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing learning pathways are linked closely to national benchmarks. Teachers use these learning pathways and benchmarks well to plan, track and monitor children's progress in these core areas of learning. Teachers are developing their confidence in using the benchmarks for the other curricular areas, in order to assess children's progress in all areas of their learning.
- Children have a range of opportunities to develop skills for learning, life and work as they progress through the school. Through motivating enterprise activities and their participation in cluster-wide projects, children learn about industry, careers, local businesses and the world of work in a relevant way. Valuable links with Fraserburgh College help children to learn about Science Technologies Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in a motivating way, whilst developing their awareness of future learning pathways beyond school. Children have made a good start to recording their own achievements, both in school through the weekly 'skills academy' and more widely at home. As planned, staff should continue to assist children to articulate the skills they are developing through such worthwhile activities.
- A range of community partners and organisations within the village and beyond, play a significant role in enhancing children's experiences. For example, well-established links with the church, community council, senior citizens, emergency services and local businesses ensure that children of all ages learn about their local community in a highly relevant way.
- Across the school, all children benefit from high-quality learning experiences delivered by specialist teachers of digital technology, physical education and the expressive arts. Most children show considerable talent in musical performances and art activities. Art and design at all levels is of a high standard. Every child's creativity is encouraged and strengthened, for example, by taking part in the school's musicals and shows, either as a performer, or in the technical aspects of theatre production.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- The Crimond Parent Partnership works very effectively with the school. They appreciate the caring, open and friendly approach from the headteacher and staff. The parent partnership fundraise extensively for the school and children benefit from new resources and events they provide.
- Using social media, leaflets and newsletters, the school provides a range of information and seeks feedback from parents. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt they received helpful, regular feedback about how their child was progressing in their learning. The school should continue to explore approaches to involve parents in school improvement.
- Parents are encouraged to involve themselves as fully as possible in the life of the school and this enhances children's experiences. Children and parents alike speak enthusiastically about events such as 'bring an adult to school' days. The wider parent body provides highly effective support for all children to achieve, such as hosting skills academy sessions, jointly providing after-school clubs and working in the school library.
- The school plays a very active role in the community. Children across the school participate in a wide range of community events, including learning Doric songs and poetry with local residents, and helping to plant community woodland at Loch of Strathbeg. Local businesses work in partnership with the school and host visits to develop children's skills for life, learning and work. The school should continue to develop their effective community links and opportunities to enhance children's learning.

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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

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 wellbeing of children and families underpins the life and work of the school. The calm, welcoming and purposeful environment helps to ensure that children enjoy learning and socialising together in a family atmosphere. Positive relationships across the school create a nurturing ethos in which children are well cared for. All children are very well known to staff as individuals. Most children who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those we spoke to in focus groups, agreed that they felt safe, were being helped to become more confident, and taught how to be healthy. Almost all felt they were treated fairly and with respect. The headteacher works tirelessly to support parents, and as a result, there is a genuine sense of mutual trust and respect between school and families.
- The supportive culture is helping children to gain confidence to talk about issues affecting them and, with the support of staff and partners, to take action to address any concerns they may have. Children from P1 to P7, in classes and in small targeted groups, are benefitting from their participation in a relaxation programme, designed to allay their anxieties and to develop their resilience. Staff can demonstrate the positive impact of this initiative on children's emotional wellbeing. For example, the school's records show greatly reduced numbers of children being referred as requiring intervention and support to deal with daily life and specific challenges.
- Staff are developing ways for children to gain the skills and confidence to empathise with others. Recently, children have made a good start to explore their wellbeing and place in society through embarking on the Rights Respecting Schools award. We have asked staff to continue to build on this valuable work, and to align it more closely to children's developing knowledge of the wellbeing indicators. This will provide children with a common language to discuss and express their views on health and wellbeing. The school has accurately identified that involving children in setting personal health and wellbeing targets is a next step. Building on this, the school should continue to develop parents' understanding of wellbeing and nurturing approaches, and the role of the wider school community in supporting this.
- Staff work together very well to provide an inclusive environment for learning in which children, parents and partners feel that their opinions and views are sought and valued. Children recognise that their contributions are important, for example, through their membership of the pupil voice groups. The school has identified that a next step is to ensure children can lead and bring about change in the school and local community through these groups.
- Children's learning in health and wellbeing is developing well overall. They have a good understanding of the importance of regular physical exercise and eating well. Through the 'health heroes' group, children are finding out about the importance of getting enough sleep. Children at all stages are learning practical food skills during 'Foodie Friday' sessions, when

each class takes it in turn to prepare healthy snacks for the other classes. A range of partners support children's learning in health and wellbeing. Dental health practitioners encourage younger children to maintain good oral hygiene. The local police officer works with children of all ages to help them to understand the importance of keeping themselves safe online.

- The school's arrangements to support children at points of transition are very well established. Tailored and enhanced approaches ensure that all children who require some additional help feel very well supported in making a smooth start in the nursery; making the transition to P1; and for older children, moving on to secondary school.
- The headteacher is aware of her roles and responsibilities related to statutory duties. The school has effective procedures in place to identify any additional support or intervention that individual children may require. Wherever necessary, school staff work well with a range of partners to ensure that the needs of children and their families are met. Children who require a Child's Plan or individualised educational plan, have one in place. These plans are appropriate and reviewed regularly with parents and partners. The headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality regularly and is proactive in dealing with and monitoring any issues that may arise.
- All children are included, engaged and involved in the life of the school. Regular professional learning opportunities for teaching and support staff help them to identify potential barriers to learning and to meet children's varying needs well. As planned, the school should continue to widen children's awareness and understanding of diversity and equality in the wider world in a planned, progressive and relevant way.

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

- As there are small numbers of children at each stage of the school, broad statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children.
- Overall, most children are making good progress in listening and talking, reading, writing and numeracy. For children with additional barriers to their learning, the evidence provided by the school indicates that most are attaining appropriate to their individual level of need. A few children across the school are exceeding national expectations for literacy or numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is good. Most children across the school are making good progress in listening, talking and reading. The majority are making good progress in writing.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, children confidently engage with adults and peers. Most are inquisitive and eager to ask questions to find out new information. At early level, most children can listen and respond to others appropriately and all children can follow simple instructions. All children enjoy songs, rhymes and listening to stories. By the end of first level, most children can listen and respond appropriately to others in a respectful way. As a result of regular opportunities for class talks and presentations, most children can communicate clearly and audibly. By second level, most children can contribute relevant ideas and can support and build on others' opinions or ideas. Almost all children can recall accurately the main ideas of information given orally.

Reading

- Overall, most children are making good progress in reading. Reading for enjoyment is actively promoted. The school has a well-resourced library and children are encouraged to take books home regularly. By the end of early level, most children can read aloud familiar texts with attention to simple punctuation. Almost all can identify the cover, title and author of a book. Most can hear and say blends made by a combination of letters. Across first level, most children can read aloud a familiar piece of text with growing fluency and understanding. Most children can discuss the characters and setting in a story. They would benefit from practice in reading aloud with more expression. By second level, most children can talk in increasing detail about characters, make predictions and read fluently with expression. Most children can use skimming and scanning strategies to select relevant information. Most can offer opinions on their favourite authors, including an author from the local Fraserburgh area, and can talk about a range of genres they have read.

Writing

- The school has identified writing as an area for improvement. Teachers are taking steps to ensure that children are provided with regular opportunities to write for a variety of purposes. Across the school, the majority of children produce good pieces of writing that demonstrate the skills they have learned in punctuation and structure. Children who need extra help with their writing enjoy success in producing pieces supported by a range of digital tools. At early level, most children are growing in confidence with pencil control and formation of letters. They enjoy exploring words and writing in a range of imaginative play activities. Towards the end of first level, most children are increasingly producing texts of length. While the quality of writing can vary, most children understand the purpose of their writing. The children would benefit from regular opportunities to practise identifying and using effective vocabulary. Across second level, the majority of children can write accurately, and at length, in a variety of genres. This includes writing about personal experiences, discursive essays and a range of poetry such as 'kennings'. Across the school, there is evidence of formative feedback being provided in children's written work. The school plans to improve the quality of this feedback further through sharing practice to ensure it supports children to make progress in their writing.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics:

- Overall, children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.
- Staff across the school have worked together to develop effective strategies to improve children's skills in mental calculations. Children in all classes have access to a range of helpful resources, including learning wall displays that support their learning in numeracy well.

Number, money and measure

- Across the school, most children are developing their skills well in number. At early level, almost all children can sequence numbers to ten, including confident use of the terms 'before, after, more and less'. A few children are making particularly strong progress and have a secure grasp of number bonds to 20 and beyond. Most children at first level are confident in rounding numbers to the nearest ten and 100. Most can add, subtract and multiply with some accuracy.
- Most children know the value of money and can identify different coins and denominations of money. Most can calculate the total value of purchases and change required. At first level, the majority can confidently work out the cost of buying multiple items. They are beginning to understand the difference between credit and debit cards. At second level, most children respond enthusiastically to planning and working within a budget during enterprise activities.

Shape, position and movement

- At the early stages, children demonstrate a good knowledge of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. At the end of first and at second level, children can identify a wide range of two-dimensional shapes and some three-dimensional objects. They are less confident at using specific vocabulary to describe the different properties of shapes. All children demonstrate an appropriate knowledge of symmetry and most can identify at least two lines of symmetry in shapes and in objects in their environment. At the second level, children use their positional skills along well alongside their coding skills to create pieces of artwork using programmable technology. Most are able to link position to prior learning in angles.

Information handling

- Across the school, children create graphs and charts linked to themes and topics. At the early stages, almost all children can display and interpret simple data. They create pictograms to display information they have gathered about their favourite books. At first and second level, most children can display data in different and appropriate ways. They use tally marks

correctly to create bar graphs and line graphs, for example to show their favourite school subjects. By the end of P7, most children can talk about and calculate probability and chance.

Attainment over time

- Overall, the school shared an accurate picture of children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for the past three years. As a result of holistic approaches to assessment and effective use of data, the school can demonstrate good progress over time for most children in learning and skills development. The headteacher maintains a clear overview of children's attainment and progress as they move through the school. This is used to plan targeted interventions to raise attainment and to support teachers to plan effectively.
- The headteacher and teachers meet throughout the year, both formally and informally to discuss children's progress across and within levels. They use a range of evidence including newly introduced standardised assessment results. Staff have opportunities for moderation in school and with colleagues in other schools. They work together to engage with the national benchmarks and are developing their confidence in making professional judgements about achievement of a level.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Across Crimond School, children are benefiting from taking part in a wide range of activities. The school recognises children's achievements through certificates, assemblies and in photographic displays. Achievements out of school are also celebrated and shared in a range of ways. Children regularly get opportunities to develop their teamwork and leaderships skills through various pupil groups such as the 'champion citizens'. The weekly skills academy allows children to choose and develop skills in a wide range of activities such as knitting, cookery, music, chess and games. All children speak highly of all the enriching opportunities they are offered.
- Children across the school have achieved success in local competitions such as the North Aberdeenshire netball gala; the Fraserburgh schools cricket festival; and a coding competition held at Robert Gordon's University in Aberdeen. A few children are competing in sport at national level. Expressive arts performances and opportunities across the school year are developing children's creativity. Residential experiences for older children help to encourage and build independence and perseverance.
- Children's attendance at clubs, activities and their participation in pupil groups is tracked by staff. The school should now support children to identify and discuss the skills they are developing through their achievements.

Equity for all learners

- Staff across the school strive to promote equity across learning for all children in an inclusive ethos. The headteacher knows and understands children and families and the socio-economic and cultural context of the local community very well.
- The school currently receives additional resources from the PEF and the headteacher has directed this appropriately at areas identified through her self-evaluation procedures. The funding is focused on raising attainment in literacy, numeracy and the development of wellbeing by supporting extra staffing, professional learning and new resources. Digital technologies and programs in reading and numeracy which support learning both in and out of school have been purchased. Teachers report these are beginning to show a positive impact through increased enthusiasm and more motivated children leading to improved attainment. The creation of the 'rainbow room' and implementation of a children's relaxation programme shows early signs of positive impact on wellbeing and readiness to learn for children involved.

The school recognises the need for interventions to be targeted, planned and implemented in a measurable way leading to improved outcomes for children.

Choice of QI : 2.5 Family learning

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

- The caring, nurturing ethos of Crimond School underpins the positive relationships between the headteacher, staff and parents. The headteacher has a well-informed understanding of the local community and, when needs are identified, the school supports families to access services from other agencies or organisations. Working with other schools in the Fraserburgh cluster, the headteacher is jointly organising a bi-annual 'Parental Engagement and Involvement' area event for families to attend. Parents we spoke to as part of the inspection reported feeling very well supported by staff.
- The school offers a range of opportunities for children to share their learning with parents and family members. For example, open days, curriculum sessions, homework activities and, increasingly, the use of licenced digital technologies. Younger children are given curricular 'learning packs' during their transition to P1, which involve activities to do at home with their family. The school plans to develop a method of sharing children's learning logs online with parents. Staff can evidence positive impact on motivation and engagement when parents are involved in children's learning. The school recognises the need to regularly analyse the factors that lead to parental engagement and plan to expand their range of strategies.
- The school has made a positive start to improving the learning of children and families, through the development of family learning approaches. As a next step, a shared definition and a clear idea of the purpose of family learning will support staff, parents and other partners, to agree how to best measure the impact of their work on children's progress.

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.