

# Summarised inspection findings

Newport Primary School

Fife Council

20 December 2022

## Key contextual information

Newport Primary School is situated in Newport-on-Tay in Fife Council. The leadership team consists of the headteacher and one principal teacher. The headteacher took up post in August 2021. The principal teacher provides day-to-day management of the Newport Nursery Class, under the overall leadership of the headteacher. The school is situated in extensive grounds providing children with regular opportunities to play and learn outdoors. At the time of inspection, the school roll consisted of 183 children across eight classes.

During session 2021-2022, the school experienced significant levels of staff absence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children's attendance rate for school session 2021-2022 was 93% which is line with the national average. In September 2022, all children lived within in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones 4 to 10.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

**very 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

- Newport Primary School is a highly inclusive and nurturing school. All staff support children to use the school vision and values very well. For example, children know that the value of respect helps them to make new friends at clubs outside of school. The school mascot 'Buttercup' the sheep, reminds children of the school vision which is to 'work together, learn together and be the best that we can be'. Children enjoy Buttercup's attendance at 'Together Times' in assembly and on school trips. Across the school, children are polite, articulate and extremely kind to each other and adults in the school.
- The highly effective headteacher provides clear leadership and direction across the school. She is supported ably by the principal teacher. They set high educational standards and are ambitious for children to achieve success. All stakeholders respect them as a senior leadership team. As a result, senior leaders are able to motivate children, parents and staff to share and sustain the school vision.
- Children have a wide range of useful opportunities to influence the work of the school. All children participate successfully in clubs and groups such as the enterprise group, eco schools or the busy bees. Each children's group creates a six-week action plan to outline their aims and think about the skills they will develop. They link the work of their action plan to global goals, sustainability and the United Nation Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As a result of the cohesive nature of this work, children are clear about the impact their actions are having on their own and others' lives.
- Children have many opportunities to develop their leadership skills. For example, the Junior Sports Leaders consider the potential challenges that may arise when leading younger groups of children. This is supporting them successfully to anticipate and solve problems in a real-life

context. Staff use a progressive pathway to develop children's leadership skills and build on what children can do. This is developing children's confidence and skills for learning, life and work very well.

- Partnership working provides valuable opportunities for children to achieve success in a range of contexts. This work is now resuming more extensively because the COVID-19 mitigations have reduced. School staff work closely with partners to ensure all children participate in outdoor learning programmes and to enhance further children's digital skills. An exciting partnership with the University of St Andrew's is helping to raise children's attainment in music.
- Senior leaders manage the strategic direction and pace of change very effectively. They identify school improvement priorities by involving all stakeholders in purposeful self-evaluation. Senior leaders consider and plan school improvement priorities carefully to ensure that they make the biggest difference for children. Children can talk clearly about school improvement priorities and the ways in which they are helping them to learn and achieve. For example, children explain that the priority of writing is helping them to improve their writing within a range of genres.
- During periods of remote learning due to COVID-19 and the subsequent recovery period, the headteacher has undertaken as many quality assurance activities as possible. This enabled her to identify accurately the school's strengths and areas for improvement. A robust quality assurance calendar is in place. More recently, the pupil council have started to use How good is OUR school? (2017) to support them in evaluating the work of the school. As planned, the headteacher should continue this work with children to increase further their contribution to school improvement.
- Upon return to full-time learning in school, staff recognised that children's emotional wellbeing was having a negative impact on their learning. Staff used Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to support children's emotional wellbeing and attendance in school. Staff created the bespoke Newport health and wellbeing toolkit. They implement strategies successfully from the toolkit to ensure that all children are motivated and ready to learn.
- All staff describe the effective support they receive from the senior leadership team. As a result, they feel empowered to participate in and lead on school improvement activities. They reflect on their work and have the skills and confidence to adapt priorities when needed. For example, staff rightly decided to focus more sharply on raising attainment in writing rather than wider literacy priorities. This is impacting positively on children's attainment in writing.
- Staff are committed to increasing their own skills and knowledge. This session, all staff are undertaking meaningful professional learning to raise attainment for all. Pupil support staff receive valuable professional learning from the skilled support for learning teacher. They express that this learning is helping them to successfully implement targeted interventions to identified children. Class teachers undertake professional enquiry small tests of change based on school improvement priorities. This is effectively developing their understanding of using research to improve educational outcomes for all 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

- Across Newport Primary School, all children are polite and respectful in their interactions with their peers, school staff and visitors. Children talk articulately about their learning and achievements. The school values of politeness, kindness, honesty, respect and responsibility, combined with the strong school vision, underpin the life and work of the school.
- Staff use a whole-school approach to develop children's understanding of their own learning. Children talk confidently about the 'Newport learning characteristics' which help them to understand how they can learn most effectively. Almost all children are eager to learn and engage very well in the calm, focused and positive environment. The headteacher engages children in regular conversations during the 'Newport Natters' pupil focus groups to involve children and act upon their views about learning. For example, children in P4 expressed their preference on classroom layout. As a result, they are learning in an environment that is more personalised to their learning needs.
- During and following the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor learning has become a more prominent feature of the school's curriculum. Teachers adopt creative teaching approaches in the extensive school grounds. For example, they work with a range of partners to provide children with high-quality outdoor learning experiences. This motivates children and is developing their skills for learning, life and work progressively.
- Teachers are beginning to use play to support learning and teaching approaches. They are at the early stages of using national guidance to develop their understanding of high-quality play pedagogy. Teachers should increase their joint working with practitioners in the nursery to embed their knowledge and understanding of effective play pedagogy. This will ensure that play is planned more effectively to provide challenge and continuity in all areas of learning as children move from nursery into the primary school.
- Teachers have built successfully on the digital skills they gained during COVID-19 when children mainly used online platforms to access learning. Teachers develop children's digital skills progressively and in highly relevant contexts. For example, children in P6 and P7 are working in partnership with Fife College to develop their coding skills. This engages children and supports them well to learn about the computer gaming industry. Across the school, all children are successfully using digital technology to record data, carry out research and share their learning. This is supporting them very well to extend and enhance their learning across most curricular areas.
- Across the school, standards of learning and teaching are good overall, with a few examples of very good practice. Teachers use a whole-school lesson model in all lessons, and across all areas of the curriculum. This is strengthening consistent approaches across the school.

Teachers share with children the purpose of learning, measures of success, the skills children will develop and links to the world of work in all lessons. As a result, almost all children are developing a strong understanding of employability and future careers. They can talk about how their learning, both in and out of school, relates to skills for learning, life and work. These connections across learning provide great coherence and relevance for children.

- Across the school, teachers and children set targets for literacy and numeracy. By P7, children are clear about what they need to do to improve in these aspects of learning. In a few classes, children need further support and more specific targets, to reflect better on their own progress in learning. Whole school targets for health and wellbeing ensure that there is a joined-up approach to developing children's attitudes and confidence in learning. In most classes, children receive useful verbal feedback that is helping to ensure they have a good understanding of their progress and next steps. Teachers are now improving the quality of written feedback as one of this session's school improvement priorities. As planned, teachers should continue to share best practice across the team about high-quality feedback.
- Teachers use a range of assessment data to support their professional judgements about the progress children are making. They develop holistic assessments to measure children's application of their literacy and numeracy skills in different contexts. Senior leaders have implemented an assessment and moderation calendar and statement. This is supporting teachers to use assessment data more accurately. Teachers use of the National Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy is developing their understanding of national standards. Teachers now need to have a stronger focus on using National Benchmarks to plan assessment activities more robustly across all curricular areas. This will enable them to assess more accurately children's progress and attainment, particularly the highest attaining children.
- Teachers have been unable to engage in moderation activities with colleagues from other establishments due to the limitations of the pandemic, alongside significant staffing challenges. They plan to now focus on moderation activities with cluster schools and within the South East Improvement Collaborative. As planned, teachers should continue to implement professional enquiry moderation projects. This use of research to implement small tests of change will support further their understanding of national standards.
- The headteacher has appropriate systems in place to track the progress of all learners. Senior leaders and teachers discuss children's progress regularly to check whether each child is on track with their learning. They identify children who require additional interventions to make progress in their learning. Staff design bespoke six-week intervention 'packages' for individual children. Staff record helpful notes, outlining which interventions across year groups are having the biggest impact on children's attainment and achievement. Pupil support assistants provide further valuable input about the progress children are making. This is helping staff to assess how well they are closing gaps in learning as a result of COVID-19 or, poverty and the cost of living crisis. All staff should continue to use the National Benchmarks during professional dialogue meetings. This will strengthen their professional judgments about what children have achieved.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The Newport Primary School curriculum rationale is underpinned by the school values. It was developed in consultation with all staff, children, parents and carers. There is a strong focus on ensuring children develop as confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and responsible citizens. Staff provide a curriculum that is relevant to the local community and the school context. For example, children recently created poppies for Remembrance Sunday and distributed them to the homes of former service personnel in the local area.
- Teachers use local authority learning pathways across all curricular areas, supporting children well to build on their prior learning. Learning pathways are based on the experiences and outcomes of a Curriculum for Excellence. Teachers plan enjoyable and relevant learning experiences ensuring that children have opportunities to make links in their learning to real-life contexts. This is developing children's skills for learning life and work very well. The headteacher has identified that a next step is to create bespoke Newport context progression planners, which align with the local authority planning formats. Senior leaders and staff are well placed to involve parents, children, the local community and partners in this work.
- A full range of partnerships is now resuming following the end of COVID-19 mitigations. These ensure that children receive rich learning experiences across a range of curricular areas. Partners reflect that the headteacher is very pro-active in securing partnerships that impact positively on children's attainment and achievement.
- Children receive a minimum of two hours quality physical education each week. Children enjoy learning outdoors and all participate in progressive outdoor learning programmes. House captains organise inter-house sports experiences, providing enjoyable opportunities to improve physical wellbeing and increase children's opportunities for wider achievement.
- All children learn French as a modern language. From the early level onwards, they experience high-quality lessons to develop their knowledge of the French language progressively. Children are confident when attempting new vocabulary and use their French to support learning throughout the school day. This is helping them to make connections across different curricular areas. Moving forward, teachers now plan to teach Spanish to children in P5 to P7.
- Commendably, all children from P5 to P7 have the opportunity to learn at least one musical instrument. For example, all children in P6 are developing their skills in reading, playing and creating their own music by learning to play the trumpet.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents report that they receive helpful and regular communication from the school about their children's learning. For example, class teachers provide a useful termly overview of planned learning. The support for learning teacher offers a weekly drop-in meeting for all parents. Parents reflect that these communications systems help them to talk to their child about their learning at home. A few parents would like more information about the ways that children's learning is assessed. As staff develop further their approaches to assessment, they should ensure that all parents are clear about these processes.
- Newport Primary School has an active Parent Council who work in close partnership with parents and school staff. The Parent Council participates in fundraising activities to support the development of the curriculum. For example, the Parent Council recently used a grant to purchase an apple press that children used to make juice, using apples grown in the school orchard. This work ran alongside a farming topic and the school's Harvest Festival. This work is enriching children's experiences and providing opportunities for them to learn in real-life contexts.

## 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

very 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

- Children have a very good understanding of their own wellbeing and what they need to do to be safe and healthy. Across the school, children talk meaningfully about the wellbeing indicators and how they link to their own lives. They use them very well to evaluate and discuss how they are feeling and what they need to do to improve.
- Staff support children very well to gain a thorough understanding of how wellbeing affects their emotions and impacts on their learning. Regular discussions with staff about wellbeing enables children to talk about their specific strengths and challenges. Children talk confidently about the broad range of elements that contribute to positive wellbeing. For example, they know that eating healthily and responsible use of social media help them to maintain good physical and emotional health. They demonstrate the ability to apply their knowledge of positive wellbeing in their day-to-day life. For example, by taking regular exercise, walking or cycling to school and making healthy food choices. Children have very good attitudes towards physical activity and fitness through a range of activities. They participate enthusiastically in physical education, clubs and activities such as netball, football and multi-sports. Many children arrive at school by car due to the rural location, however many choose to 'park and stride', to walk part of the journey. The Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO) record children's physical wellbeing in this area.
- Across the school, staff have very positive relationships and interactions with children. All staff have a clear focus on promoting and nurturing children's health and wellbeing. This results in a very supportive culture and ethos, where children feel confident and safe. The learning environment in all classes promotes children to think about their skills and their own strengths and attributes. At all stages, children respond to these approaches very well, by displaying a sound knowledge of what they can do to help themselves learn and achieve.
- In pre-inspection questionnaires, almost all children say that they feel safe in school, and that staff are good at dealing with bullying. Almost all children say that the school helps them to understand and to respect others, and that they feel respected by staff. Children know they have adults they can talk to if they have concerns or if they need help.
- Children benefit from a broad and well-planned health and wellbeing curriculum. As a result, they are developing very good skills and understanding in areas such as positive relationships, the importance of physical exercise and healthy eating. Children can talk confidently about keeping themselves safe online and about protecting their personal information.
- Staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities and statutory duties related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. The school's approaches to child protection, safeguarding and meeting the additional support needs of learners are firmly embedded in legislation and national guidance, such as 'Getting it right for every child'.

- The local authority submitted self-evaluation information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and related key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school health promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.
- Staff employ a range of very successful, targeted interventions to secure progress and improve attainment for children who have additional needs. The highly-skilled support for learning teacher carries out her various roles with dedication and sensitivity. She provides all staff with very helpful guidance and strategies, so that teachers can meet the varying needs of all children in classes. Staff work collaboratively with other agencies, such as allied health professionals and third-sector organisations, to ensure that children's needs are very well met.
- This school session, the headteacher has introduced an assessment tool to gather information about all children's feelings of their own health and wellbeing. Senior leaders have successfully used this data to identify next steps for the whole school, for each class, and specific interventions for individual children. As a result, staff meet the emotional wellbeing needs of children very well through whole-school approaches, such as building resilience. In addition, they provide enhanced support for individual children through a range of well-planned interventions and nurture-focused activities. Pupil support staff receive special training to help individual children to manage their anxieties and concerns. Senior leaders monitor routinely the impact of all interventions to ensure these are benefitting children. There is clear evidence to show that the school's targeted supports are having a positive impact on improving the emotional wellbeing of individual children.
- Children across the school are developing their understanding of equality and diversity well. Teachers skilfully link the school values, the wellbeing indicators and children's rights into day-to-day lessons. As a result, children can talk about their rights, the rights of others and why this is important for their wellbeing. At the middle stages, children can explain the importance of having empathy and 'putting themselves in others' shoes'. As part of learning in health and wellbeing, religious and moral education and through novel studies, older children explore the concepts of discrimination, cultural diversity and stereotypes. The school has a well-stocked library that enables children to access reading material about different religions and cultures. A next step is for children to learn about the wider set of protected characteristics. This will help them to expand their understanding of equality and diversity, and the wider society beyond their local community.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- Across the school, overall levels of attainment are very good. The school's data shows that overall, most children achieved appropriate levels attainment in literacy and English, and the majority achieved appropriate levels numeracy and mathematics for session 2021-2022.
- In session 2021-2022, teachers were less confident about declaring children's achievement of a level. The headteacher identified this was as a result of periods of disruption during COVID-19 recovery. The steps the headteacher has taken to improve approaches to assessment and tracking are already resulting in more reliable and higher predictions of attainment for session 2022-2023.
- Inspection activities confirm that across the school, most children are achieving expected levels of attainment in literacy and English, and numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, a significant minority of children exceed expected levels. Children with barriers to learning are making very good progress towards their individual targets.

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children are achieving expected levels of attainment in reading, writing, listening and talking.

#### Listening and talking

- By the end of early level, children can listen attentively to adults and follow directions very well. They take turns successfully to contribute their opinions in small and larger groups. Children who have achieved first level, ask and answer questions articulately. They listen well for information and can recall key facts. Children who are on track to achieve second level are highly articulate. They enjoy preparing class talks and can identify the key features of a quality audience. They would benefit from extending further their oracy skills by taking part in stimulating debates.

#### Reading

- By the end of early level, children can confidently recognise, say and write individual and blended sounds. They can identify different sources of texts, including digital solutions, to read for information. Children who recently achieved first level, read familiar texts with fluency, almost all with great expression. They summarise the main ideas within a text and identify different features of the writer's use of language. Children who are on track to achieve, and potentially exceed, second level by the end of P7 show a genuine enthusiasm for reading. They read an appropriate range of texts and can discuss confidently the writer's choice of language. They recognise technical language and can answer inferential questions.

## Writing

- Children at the end of early level, can confidently write simple sentences. They use capital letters, full stops and question marks accurately in their writing. Children who have achieved first level, use adjectives, adverbs and conjunctions effectively in their writing. At early and first level, children are improving their skills in structuring their writing within a variety of genres. Children who are on track to achieve, and potentially exceed, second level by the end of P7 can compare the style and tone required for different genres, such as persuasive, personal, functional and imaginative writing.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children are achieving expected levels of attainment in numeracy and mathematics.

## Number, money and measure

- Children who have achieved early level, can sequence numbers forwards and backwards to 30 and beyond. They can identify daily and weekly routines linked to periods of time and recognise time to the hour. Children who have achieved first level, can identify the place value of digits in numbers up to 1000. Almost all solve two-part problems mentally involving division and multiplication. At early and first level, children would benefit from further opportunities to use coins and notes in practical situations. Children working at second level have a very good understanding of number processes. They can budget very well and recognise that issues such as the 'cost of living crisis' can impact on household spending.

## Shape, position and movement

- Children who have achieved early level, can describe the properties of and identify lines of symmetry within 2D shapes. They can use positional language to provide simple instructions for movement and direction. Children who have achieved first level, can calculate the area of a given shape. They can provide directions using compass points accurately. Children who are working at second level, can use correct mathematical vocabulary to describe a range of angles including acute, straight and reflex. They would benefit from practical tasks in measuring units of weight and volume.

## Information handling

- Children who have achieved early level, can interpret information from a simple bar graph. Children who have achieved first level, can interpret information from bar graphs to draw accurate conclusions about the information they have. At second level, children can accurately gather, organise and display data using graphs and charts both digitally and in written form. They understand the concept of probability to predict the likelihood of given events.

## Attainment over time

- The school can provide attainment data for the last five years that shows a trend of high levels of attainment across the school. Attainment data for session 2021-2022 shows the impact of COVID-19 on children's attainment and achievement, especially in writing. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) to provide additional staff who implement targeted interventions in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing for identified children. This work is already having a significant impact in accelerating children's progress and mitigating against the impact of COVID-19.
- Across the school, most children are making very good progress across most curricular areas. Most children achieve high levels of attainment in modern languages, music, health and wellbeing and, digital technologies.

## **Overall quality of learner's achievements**

- Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to achieve success within school. All children participate successfully in pupil leadership groups and accredited outdoor learning programmes. Staff plan meaningful opportunities for children to contribute to the life and ethos of the school. Children record their achievements in whole class 'Wider Achievement' books. Children celebrate and share their success during 'Together Time' assemblies and with their families on class blogs. Senior leaders track this information to identify children who are at risk of missing out. Children link their achievements to the 'Newport learning characteristics' and the four capacities of CfE. As a result, children are able to identify the skills and attributes they are developing.

## **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a very good understanding of hidden poverty and the needs of children within the school. They take steps to ensure that all children can participate fully in opportunities such as school trips and themed or fun days.
- Staff support children with barriers to learning very effectively to ensure they can achieve success across the curriculum. For example, the format for pupil leadership groups is adapted to ensure all children have opportunities to develop their leadership skills and achieve success.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

Staff at Newport Primary School use Pupil Equity Funding particularly well to implement successful interventions in literacy, numeracy or health and wellbeing. This support is targeted at identified learners who may have gaps in learning as a result of COVID-19, or learners who have barriers to learning.

Central to this work, is the highly effective teamwork between school staff and the skilled support for learning teacher. The support for learning teacher meets regularly with class teachers to discuss the progress children are making. Together, they identify children who require additional support to make progress in their learning. The support for learning teacher undertakes pre intervention assessments to pinpoint children's needs. She designs bespoke six-week interventions 'packages' for individual children. In addition, she provides all staff with very helpful guidance and universal strategies to support all children in classes. As a result, teachers can meet the varying needs of all children in classes very well.

Pupil support assistants, with the guidance of the support for learning teacher, implement agreed interventions for targeted children. A key feature of their work is the highly effective professional learning they receive to learn about pedagogical approaches and resources which best meet children's needs. Post intervention assessments indicate that their support is having a significant impact in accelerating individual children's progress and is closing gaps in their learning successfully.

The dedicated and nurturing support for learning teacher proactively involves and supports parents and carers to discuss their children's progress and wellbeing. She holds a weekly drop-in session for parents to discuss their children's learning and development. Commendably, this is not solely for parents of children receiving additional support but for all parents in the school. This helps parents to feel involved in their child's learning and ensures that questions or concerns they may have are addressed promptly within a nurturing ethos.

Support staff provide enhanced wellbeing support for individual children through a range of very well-planned interventions and nurture-focused activities. Pupil support staff receive special training to help individual children to manage their anxieties and concerns. There is clear evidence to show that the school's targeted supports are having a positive impact on improving the emotional wellbeing of individual children.

## 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.