

Summarised inspection findings

North Roe Primary School

Shetland Island Council

SEED No: 6101925

23 October 2017

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

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 education at North Roe Primary School. The vision is rooted into the belief that children's learning and ambition is supported by a vibrant school community. The school's vision, values and aims are a strong feature of the school. They are displayed across the school and shared with parents and the wider community. The headteacher has worked diligently to build positive relationships in order to establish the school at the heart of the local community. She has been successful in encouraging parents and partners to invest time, money and resources in supporting the school.
- Staff throughout North Roe Primary School have a strong child-centred approach and are committed to school improvement. The opinions of the headteacher and staff play a major part in determining next steps to improve the school. Children and parents are also given regular opportunities to contribute to school improvement predominantly through surveys, questionnaires, suggestion boxes and school events. All children in the school participate in the pupil council and the school has a very supportive Parent Council in place. The school should now introduce ways to further involve partner agencies in contributing towards school improvement.
- There is a school improvement plan (SIP) in place which has been shared and agreed with the Parent Council. Commendably, the SIP is influenced strongly by the National Improvement Framework (NIF) with improvement priorities for 2016/17 including, developing programmes for numeracy, improving the outside area to provide more scope for outdoor learning, and enhancing opportunities for family learning. However, the process of self-evaluation leading to the development of the improvement plan is not sufficiently explicit and is built on limited evidence. Analysis of available data and more robust, rigorous tracking and monitoring of children's progress should play a more prominent role in influencing school improvement. This evidence would help the school better identify areas requiring immediate attention. The school's improvement priorities need to have increased focus on the major issues currently facing the school for example, raising attainment and achievement, developing the curriculum and improving learning and teaching approaches to meet the needs of all learners.
- Quality assurance activities are not always undertaken in a timeous manner, often being overtaken by operational duties and staffing issues. Staff need to ensure that approaches to quality assurance are given more priority and undertaken in a formal, comprehensive and systematic fashion. Senior managers need to undertake more rigorous monitoring of the quality of learning and teaching across the school to ensure there is sufficient pace and challenge for learners'. A clear focus for these visits should be established and evidence of follow-up/impact shown.

- The school is aware that there is a need to develop more effective whole-school tracking and monitoring of children's progress with their learning across all areas of the curriculum, starting with literacy and numeracy. Interrogation of valuable intelligence and data would better help determine whether developments, such as a recent focus on spelling and Growth Mindsets, are having a positive impact on children's attainment and achievement.
- Staff participate in a small number of worthwhile career-long professional learning opportunities through moderation activities, sharing good practice and developing approaches to meet the increasingly diverse needs of children attending the school. However, teachers would greatly benefit from increased access to more individual and collective training opportunities including, looking outwardly by visiting other schools across Shetland and beyond. The headteacher recognises that the school is isolated and would welcome more opportunities to liaise with her peers to discuss strategic leadership and school improvement.
- There is a need for the success criteria of any school improvement priority to be explicitly focused on impacting positively upon outcomes for children rather than being predominantly based on improving the school's systems and processes. There is clear evidence of improved outcomes for children particularly in terms of their confidence and self-esteem. The school now needs to focus on increasing the pace of improvement especially in relation to raising attainment and achievement across the school.

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*

Learning and engagement

- Positive relationships are a key feature across the school. Children are generally engaged in their learning, keen to please and when given the opportunity, interact well with each other during activities. In lessons where children are encouraged to select tasks and activities and become involved in agreeing the learning intentions and success criteria for the lesson or series of lessons, they are settled and engaged in learning. In other lessons the children would benefit from such opportunities.
- Overall, learners' experiences are enjoyable but are not always pitched at the correct level to enable all children to achieve as well as they could. The range of learning and teaching approaches should continue to be developed and they should be employed and utilised in the most appropriate way to allow all children to engage as well as they can. There is scope for children to become more independent in their learning.
- Children have opportunities to contribute their views through class discussions and membership of the pupil council. The Eco committee, Rights Respecting Schools group and Health group provide opportunities for children to participate in school decision-making. A useful next step would be to increase these opportunities and also plan for children across the school to have further leadership opportunities.
- Some work has been carried out through working with parents, other partners and local businesses to raise awareness of career opportunities. There is now scope in the course of learning and teaching to raise children's awareness of the transferrable life skills that they are developing and how they are key to becoming successful in their chosen future careers.

Quality of teaching

- Led by the headteacher, staff work hard to provide bright and stimulating learning environments. Classroom spaces and resources are well organised and are conducive to positive learning and teaching.
- In most lessons the majority of children are motivated and stay on task. In the most effective lessons instructions and explanations are conveyed clearly enabling children to understand the what, how and why they are learning.
- Teachers interact well with children and are supportive of those who are having difficulty in completing tasks. There is scope to improve the feedback that is given to children in how to improve their learning. We ask teachers to consider how best to ensure appropriate

challenge for all children and how to plan for effective differentiation of learning within a multi-composite class.

- The school is at the early stages of working with children to set appropriate learning targets and help them develop strategies that will support them in achieving these targets. There is a need to develop this further which will help children to take more ownership of their learning.
- When given the opportunity, children used digital technology confidently. The school should continue to develop children's use of digital technology which will promote motivating and relevant learning activities.

Effective use of assessment

- The school's approaches to assessment need further development. There is not yet significant evidence of the impact of moderation or understanding of standards. Staff need to continue to develop their knowledge and skills of approaches to assessment so they are able to judge more accurately when children achieve a level.
- Data is not yet used effectively or consistently to guide decisions about learning and teaching. It is important that the school becomes clearer about their strategy to raise attainment for all. We would encourage them to develop further their Assessment is for Learning strategies. This will help support children to understand themselves better as learners and know what they need to do to improve.
- The school has started to work with other schools in the cluster to moderate standards in writing. Staff should continue to develop their moderation practices, taking account of new national benchmarks, to ensure assessment evidence covers a breadth of learning and provides a sound basis for planning future learning. We would also ask the school to reflect on the information which informs teacher professional judgements and consider adding to their bank of assessments. Over time the school should continue to develop its approaches to moderation through using the national benchmarks and extend this to all curricular areas.

Planning, tracking and monitoring

- The school has made an early start to tracking and monitoring children's progress through Learning Journals. However, planning, tracking and monitoring across the school is not yet sufficiently robust. The headteacher recognises the need to develop more rigorous approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress that leads to improvements in practice as well as improved outcomes for learners. As this develops, it will be important to be clear about what evidence needs to be gathered in respect of individuals and groups to demonstrate effectively and consistently breadth, challenge and application across all areas of learning.

2.2 Curriculum: theme 2: Learning Pathways

- The headteacher has worked with staff, parents and children to review the vision, values and aims for North Roe Primary School. They encourage children to develop their skills as learners and become responsible citizens of their school and community. The school has yet to create a curriculum rationale. This should detail the key elements of Curriculum for Excellence such as the contexts for learning, entitlements and principles of curriculum design. Like the vision, values and aims, the rationale should be devised by the school in collaboration with staff, parents and children.
- In supporting the development of the curriculum, staff would benefit from creating an appropriate curricular framework. This will provide clarity in how to organise and plan the curriculum and consider how it is reflected across the four contexts of learning. Alongside this work the school should develop appropriate curriculum learning pathways. This will ensure children are receiving a broad general education and benefit from learning opportunities which progressively develop their skills and knowledge across all contexts for learning. As this is being implemented, the school should be aware of the 'Tackling Bureaucracy' agenda. A coherent, purposeful and streamlined approach which is mindful of workload needs to be taken.
- Curriculum planning takes some account of national guidance for Curriculum for Excellence. Staff refer to, and make some use of, the experiences and outcomes in each curricular area. In providing meaningful and relevant contexts for learning they are beginning to group experiences and outcomes from within and across curriculum areas. Further development work is required to ensure a collegiate understanding of interdisciplinary learning which builds on current practice and provides children with more opportunities to learn in meaningful contexts.
- Across the school, children are provided with some opportunities to develop important skills for learning, life and work. As the school develops further its approach to supporting skills for learning, life and work, it will be important to ensure that experiences and opportunities are planned across the four contexts of learning, including outdoor learning, and that enterprise and creativity skills are routinely tracked in respect of individual children.

2.7 Partnerships: theme 3: Impact on learners – Parental Engagement

- Parental involvement is an integral part of school life with almost all parents contributing to the Parent Council and regularly attending school events such as the Sunday Teas and the Christmas show.
- The school meaningfully involves parents and in some cases other family members in their child's learning through, for example the regular use of parent helpers and the homework 'choice board'. This supports parents to build on learning at home. The school also actively encourages parents to encourage children to read for pleasure at home.

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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

satisfactory

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*

- Led by the headteacher, staff work effectively to provide an inclusive, caring environment based on the school's vision and values. Classrooms, the dining room and the playground are calm, bright and welcoming environments for learning and socialising. Positive relationships between staff, children and their families are a strong feature at North Roe Primary School. Staff know the children and their families very well. This helps to create a nurturing ethos where children feel safe, cared for and valued. They know they can talk to adults in the school and share any worries or concerns about their education or any other personal matters affecting their wellbeing. Children, parents and partners consistently highlight the welcoming ethos and positive relationships between children and staff as key strengths of the school.
- The school places emphasis on the personal and social development of children. Aided by a recent whole school focus on Growth Mindsets, children are developing their confidence, resilience and respect for others. All children demonstrate positive behaviour and show consideration for others. In particular, children and their families speak highly of the school's approaches to developing confidence which has led to children successfully participating in school shows and engaging positively with visitors to the school.
- Displays highlighting the Getting it Right For Every Child wellbeing indicators and Children's Rights are prominent across the school. The school needs to continue to embed the use of the indicators to achieve a shared, whole school community understanding of wellbeing which meets the needs of children and their families and which will allow children to self-assess their wellbeing and to identify next steps. Staff should consider how the wellbeing indicators could be integrated into learning and teaching approaches to engage children in exploring their own wellbeing and to be involved in discussions around how their views and ideas can feed into creating a whole-school learning environment which supports all aspects of their health and their wellbeing.
- The headteacher is well informed about the personal and social circumstances of children and their families and uses this information well to support children at key transition points notably from nursery into P1 and from P7 to secondary.
- The school recognises the considerable potential to extend the use made of the outdoor environment to enhance learning experiences and should continue with plans to do so.
- The school does not have any curricular programmes in place for health and wellbeing (HWB) to ensure children are receiving progressive learning experiences. Children at all

stages have a limited understanding of how to keep healthy. The school needs to ensure that children receive their entitlement to HWB learning experiences.

- Children are given a range of opportunities to engage in physical activity including input from a specialist physical education teacher. The school now needs to ensure all children access two hours of quality physical education in line with national guidance.
- All children participate in the pupil council and a few pupils are planned to have upcoming responsibilities in areas such as Children's Rights and health. This is helping enable children to have a say in the day to day life of the school, purchasing of resources, and, to a degree, school improvement. They have a strong voice in playground resources, school trips and activities, and organising school events. There is scope to further develop pupil voice particularly in terms of influencing school improvement and learning and teaching approaches.
- Staff have a working knowledge of statutory requirements and codes of practice and this is embedded into the day to day life of the school. The school now needs to fully implement Curriculum for Excellence in line with national guidance to ensure children receive their entitlement to a broad, balanced, progressive curriculum. Senior managers also need to ensure that children are benefitting from additional support where appropriate. In particular, more focus should be placed on reviewing and evaluating the quality of individualised educational plans and whether any bespoke approaches are leading to improved outcomes for the children concerned.
- Children are provided with a wide range of curricular opportunities to value and celebrate diversity, challenge discrimination and develop their understanding of global citizenship. As a result, children are knowledgeable about inclusion and equalities and a few are able to articulate how they would challenge discrimination and religious intolerance.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners*

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. The headteacher recognises the benefit of participating in moderation activities which develop a shared understanding of standards in and achievement of a level. The school has made an early start to becoming more involved in this process. The school should proceed with the creation of literacy and numeracy pathways which will provide further coherence and progression in children's experiences in all aspects of literacy and numeracy.
- **Literacy:** Children's skills in talking and listening are being developed well across the school. As they progress children are becoming more skilled in participating in conversations and using active listening skills to share ideas, thoughts and feelings. To develop this further, children should be given more planned opportunities to talk to a variety of audiences. From the early stages, children read independently on a regular basis and are developing their fluency and understanding. Across all stages, children can explain the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts. Children read for enjoyment and can talk about a favourite book and author. At all stages, children write regularly for a range of purposes and in a variety of contexts, including relevant contexts across the curriculum. A stronger focus on technical accuracy including punctuation, handwriting and presentation will support children to make continued progress.
- **Numeracy:** As they progress through the school the majority of children are developing their understanding of number, money and measure. They can identify increasingly complex patterns and sequences and can describe confidently the properties of an increasing range of shapes and objects. They have a growing understanding of symmetrical pictures and shapes. Across the school there is a significant need to provide further planned opportunities for children to develop their mental agility skills. Where children have opportunities to learn using games, they learn effectively. Staff should develop approaches to ensure children have regular, planned opportunities to engage in open-ended, challenging tasks requiring them to work together to solve problems and develop mathematical thinking skills.

Attainment over time

- Due to the small number of children within the school, available data cannot accurately define trends over time in attainment. Data presented by the school from teachers' professional judgement indicates that overall attainment in numeracy and literacy is satisfactory. It shows that a majority of children make satisfactory progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. It is the view of inspectors that there is

headroom for improvement in children's attainment in literacy and numeracy. Children with additional support needs make satisfactory progress from prior learning.

- The school should revisit the use and purpose of Assessment for Learning strategies to help support teachers' professional judgement of standards of attainment. This will help support teachers to challenge and raise standards for all children.
- More robust tracking of teacher professional judgement would provide more details about children's strengths and next steps in learning. The school now needs to track progress in all curricular areas more robustly. This will ensure a clear view of children's progress across the curriculum.

Quality of Achievement

- Overall, children experience a wide range of opportunities such as sporting and cultural events. Their successes and achievements are celebrated regularly in school assemblies and through activities such as Star Writer and Hot Choc Friday. This is helping them increase their confidence and self-esteem and is enabling them to develop their personal interests further. Children's citizenship skills are developing well as a result of active engagement with the school community and participation in activities such as News Day Tuesday and Wonder Wednesday. Children have a sound awareness of green issues partly as a result of the school's work in Eco-Schools Scotland. Children experience a range of after school clubs to develop skills and interests. There is scope to develop further the leadership skills of children at all stages across the school.
- Overall, children are confident and contribute to the life of their school. They take on responsibilities in the local community and work with a range of partners. As a result of work with partners, children have and can articulate aspirations they have for their future. There is a need to make children more aware of the skills they are developing through this variety of learning experiences. Children are not always sufficiently aware of the skills they are using or how to apply their skills in different contexts.
- The school recognises the need to develop the monitoring and tracking of children's achievements so that they continue to make progress and can be involved in planning and recognising their progress. The school should also explore further ways in which children's achievements can be recognised such as through accreditation.

Equity for all learners

- There is a clear focus on promoting equity within the school with the funding of all educational excursions and school trips and the purchase of school sweatshirts for all children. The school now needs to ensure that they track all learners more robustly to ensure further equity for all.

School choice of QI: 2.5 - Family learning

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

- The school has placed significant emphasis on the importance of family learning in recent times and it is an improvement priority in the 2016/17 SIP. Led by the headteacher, the school has developed very strong relationships with all children and their families.
- There are opportunities to build on the very positive relationship the school has with parents to explore what family learning opportunities could be developed which would add to the skills and wellbeing of both children and their families. Such developments should be progressed in full partnership with parents, children and where relevant, other partners in the community, to ensure they meet family needs both efficiently and effectively. Specific focus could be placed on the context of the community and centre around skills development, for example Developing the Young Workforce.
- Parents are supported to be actively and meaningfully involved in their child's learning and life at the school. Staff work with parents to reduce potential barriers to engagement and are highly responsive to family circumstances such as lambing season and harvests.
- The school is keen to offer high quality universal and targeted support to families, with help from partners that enable them to access learning activities which meet their interests. There is scope for families to be more engaged and participate in designing and delivering high quality learning programmes within the school and local community.
- The school could consider introducing a structured calendar series of monthly events and sessions to offer to families over the academic year. In particular, literacy and numeracy sessions delivered by staff could enable parents and wider family members to gain a deeper understanding of what is taught at the school and the methodologies deployed. This could support the next step of moving from parental involvement towards family learning, foster stronger home-school links and improve outcomes for children.

Particular strengths of the school

- Led by the vision of the headteacher, the school's strong partnerships with parents and the local community which enhance children's learning experiences.
- Positive relationships across the school which are leading to children feeling safe, cared for and valued.
- The focus on recognising success and achievement which is helping to increase children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Polite, well-mannered children who are keen to learn and are proud of their school.

Agreed areas for improvement for the school

- Raise attainment and achievement.
- Develop the curriculum in line with national guidance. Focus should be placed on ensuring children are benefitting from learning activities which progressively develop their skills and knowledge across all areas of their learning.
- Develop more robust and rigorous approaches to assessing, tracking and monitoring children's progress with their learning.
- The school needs to take a more focussed approach to self-evaluation, quality assurance and improvement planning.

What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Shetland Islands Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Education Scotland

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330
E enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.education.gov.scot

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