

# Summarised inspection findings

**Westfield School**

Aberdeenshire Council

25 April 2023

## Key contextual information

Westfield School is an all through special school in the town of Fraserburgh, Aberdeenshire. The school supports learners from five to 18 who have a wide range of significant additional support needs.

The senior leadership team comprises a headteacher and a depute headteacher.

At the time of the inspection, the school roll was 46 children and young people across primary and secondary stages. All children and young people have significant additional support needs. Twenty six percent of pupils reside in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles 1 and 2.

Modernisation of the school building has improved the learning environment. Learners benefit from a wide range of learning, wellbeing and sensory spaces.

### 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 the school, all staff have caring and nurturing relationships with children and young people based on the school's values and vision. This helps to improve children and young people's wellbeing, supporting them to overcome any anxieties they may have with their learning. Staff help children and young people to feel safe, included and confident in seeking support when required. If a child becomes distressed, most staff are adept in supporting them to regulate their behaviour and quickly reengage with their learning.
- Most teachers are adopting a range of creative learning and teaching strategies to help motivate and engage children and young people in their learning. As a result, most children and young people are highly motivated and engage enthusiastically in learning activities. They respond well to structured learning activities including independent tasks, collaborative working and a mix of practical and desk-based activities.
- Staff provide a calm, consistent learning environment in which most children and young people enjoy learning. In most classes, staff interact sensitively with learners requiring additional support. This helps almost all children and young people to engage positively and increase their readiness to learn. Most children and young people participate well in independent learning activities and work successfully in pairs and small groups. Learners engage in activities centring on fine motor skills, communication skills, play and sensory development. During morning and end of day routines, staff encourage learners to develop responsibility and independence. Teachers ensure that learners can choose from a range of soft start activities which take account of their interests. However, a minority of children and young people are not challenged adequately with their learning. Teachers now need to ensure that they plan learning activities which provide sufficient challenge to children and young people with different learning abilities.

- All teachers use whole class visual timetables well to support learners' understanding of routines, activities, places and expectations. Children and young people are encouraged to sign supported by adult modelling. Staff should continue developing approaches and resources for an inclusive communication environment through the use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC). This would strengthen learners' ability to make choices, use practical language, express their views, and develop social interactions.
- Almost all staff have a sound knowledge of children and young people's learning needs and personal circumstances. Children and young people respond well to personalised strategies and the high-quality individualised support they receive from teachers and support staff. Staff use these personalised strategies to support effectively children and young people during times of change. As a result, most children and young people can successfully transition from one activity to another, participate in organising and tidying class areas, and travel around the school in a calm fashion.
- In most classes, teachers use digital technology well to support learning and teaching. There are examples of staff using digital technology effectively to support identified children and young people to communicate and engage extensively in tasks and activities. Staff need to continue developing their use of digital technology and other communication aids to support all learners to participate more fully in their learning.
- At the early primary stages, staff are developing their approaches to learning through play. They have introduced development spaces to provide improved opportunities for play based learning. All young children have regular access to structured play activities. As a result, young children are beginning to explore, discover, and problem solve in more playful ways. This supports young children in developing social, turn-taking and communication skills. Teachers and practitioners should continue to develop approaches to play across the school. They should take account of national guidance working alongside nursery staff to further strengthen this work.
- Teachers use a range of assessment approaches well to make judgements about children and young people's progress with their learning. Most learning activities build on children and young people's prior learning. A few teachers are skilled at using creative assessment approaches to determine whether children and young people achieve identified milestones with their learning. Most teachers support learners to make progress by using questions which take account of children and young people's personal interests and abilities. Teachers now need to develop and plan assessment approaches to measure accurately children and young people's progress across all curriculum areas.
- Teachers have made a promising start using milestones and benchmarks to help assess children and young people's progress and achievement. Teachers need greater support in making judgements about the achievement of a level. As planned, senior leaders should increase opportunities for teachers to engage in moderation activities with each other and colleagues from other schools.
- The school has established a planning framework to monitor and track children and young people's progress and achievements. Senior managers monitor systematically the quality of assessment, recording and tracking in each class, providing support and challenge to teachers as necessary. Teachers' tracking of children and young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy is becoming increasingly effective. Teachers' use of progressive literacy and numeracy pathways is supporting children and young people to build on prior learning. As staff develop the curriculum, they need to ensure that children and young people build on prior learning across all areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders and teachers should review and

evaluate their tracking and monitoring approaches for learning in different contexts. In doing so, they should consider streamlining their systems to avoid any unnecessary bureaucracy.

## 2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

## 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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

#### Broad General Education (BGE)

- All children and young people require significant levels of additional support. Overall, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children and young people in the BGE phase of education are working at Curriculum for Excellence (CFE) early level or pre early level. Overall, they make good progress when compared to prior levels of learning. Children and young people working at first level make good progress when compared to prior levels of attainment

#### Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, most children and young people are supported well to make good progress in listening and talking. A few children and young people are making very good progress with their reading and writing, and most children and young people are making good progress.

#### Listening and talking

- Most children and young people communicate well with school staff using speech, communication systems or symbols. They listen well to class instructions and demonstrate this through responding to questions asked of them. As a result, most children and young people interact positively with class activities.
- A minority of children and young people demonstrate listening and talking skills beyond the school. Staff should progress with plans to ensure all children and young people benefit from more opportunities to build important life skills in community-based activities.

#### Reading

- Staff across the school are working well to establish a culture of reading across the school. The school has a well-resourced library in the heart of the building which supports this work. The library has a range of texts suitable for emergent readers through to more confident readers. Teachers and support staff use the library well to enhance children and young people's enjoyment of reading. As a result, a majority of children and young people are building upon their enjoyment of stories. They experience valuable opportunities to develop learning about independent life skills. For example, children and young people have learned to use the toilet more independently. Staff supported children to achieve this through converting a story popular with the children and linking it to individual toileting skills.

#### Writing

- Most children and young people are developing well their pre-early level and early level writing skills. This involves developing fine motor skills, independent mark making, over writing,

communicating ideas to staff or forming letters and numbers. Children and young people would benefit from further opportunities and practice in writing independently and developing strategies to create a range of texts.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- The majority of children and young people are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children and young people are making satisfactory progress. Most learners perform strongest in number, money and measure. Most children and young people are transferring successfully their numeracy skills into real-life contexts. Learners would benefit from increased opportunities across the curriculum to progress further their numeracy and mathematics skills.

## **Number, money and measure**

- Most children working at the early stages of milestones can participate in songs which involve an introduction to number. They can demonstrate an awareness of numbers that come next in a familiar sequence. A majority of children working at the upper stages of milestones can use counting to identify accurately a total number of items. Most children and young people working at early level can independently count numbers up to ten. Most young people working at first level use money well to purchase items in a shop. Children and young people working at early level understand the sequence of events through practical activities such as following visual daily timetables.

## **Shape, position and movement**

- Almost all children and young people enjoy taking part in learning activities that develop their understanding of movement, position, strength, speed and direction. Most children and young people working at early level are investigating well the properties of two-dimensional shapes. They can recognise two-dimensional shapes with verbal support. Most young people working at first level can identify and use concrete materials to enhance their understanding of two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They are able to identify and describe features of three-dimensional objects such as side, face and base.

## **Attainment over time**

- The pandemic impacted negatively on a majority of children and young people's attainment. As the school recovers from the pandemic, attainment is steadily improving across curricular areas. This could be accelerated further through recognising learners' skills developed during the pandemic and building upon them.
- A majority of children and young people demonstrate strengths in how they develop life skills. This includes how they understand good personal care, how to stay healthy and how to meet their immediate needs. Senior leaders are now working with staff to introduce a life skills development approach to tracking. As planned, senior leaders should continue to work with teachers to improve approaches to monitoring the progress of children and young people across all curricular areas including their life skills. This will better inform teachers about which targeted approaches or interventions may support children and young people to accelerate progress with learning.
- In the senior phase, since 2020, all young people gain National Qualification unit awards at National 1. National awards cover expressive arts, health and wellbeing, language and communication, numeracy and technologies. The school works in partnership with a local secondary school and college to enable young people to gain awards beyond National 2. A minority of young people gain National 2 - National 5 awards by the time they leave school. These awards are across a small range of subjects including woodwork, art and physical education. The school should now provide a broader range of National Qualifications and

accreditation opportunities. This will ensure that all young people can benefit from a pathway through the senior phase and achieve more.

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

- Children and young people's achievements and successes are recognised and shared using digital platforms, displays, and other appropriate ways. Children and young people are proud of their contribution to the whole school's achievements. They are proud of how they are helping the school become an ECO school, of their contribution to the pupil council, and their personal achievements and successes. They develop important independent and cooperation skills through participating in well-designed activities in school and within the grounds.
- A number of identified children and young people move successfully to local primary schools, secondary schools or enhanced provisions within a mainstream setting. These children and young people develop successfully their skills for learning and readiness to be challenged further. Since 2018, a majority of school leavers have progressed successfully to college. A minority of young people progress to adult services in line with their additional support needs.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Senior leaders and staff clearly understand the needs of the children, young people and community. They consult with parents to consider ways to utilise Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) allocations. Senior leaders use this knowledge and information gathered during parental consultation to inform how to spend this additional funding. Overall, PEF funding is used well to target inclusion, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. For example, sport and fitness instructors are providing children and young people opportunities to participate in activities that would not normally be accessible to them. Additional staffing supports children and young people access meaningful educational experiences in mainstream schools as part of their education plan. Senior leaders now need to measure more effectively how PEF funding reduces attainment gaps for identified children and their families. This will inform better future improvement planning in how the school can target PEF funding most effectively.



## 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.