

Agenda item	<b>11</b>
Report no	<b>RC/030/19</b>

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

**Committee:** Ross and Cromarty Committee

**Date:** 14 August 2019

**Report Title:** Report on Education Scotland activity in Coulhill Primary, w/b 4 March 2019

**Report By:** Steph Wood, Education Quality Improvement Manager, Mid Area

### 1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the outcomes of the visit by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) to Coulhill Primary School, from 4 to 7 March 2019. This was a full inspection, running across four days. The acting Head Teacher at Coulhill Primary is Mr Lawrence Bews.

### 2. Implications

2.1 Resource – none beyond existing school budgetary allocations

Legal - none

Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) - none

Climate Change/Carbon Clever - none

Risk – none

Gaelic – none

### 3. Recommendations

3.1 Members are asked to scrutinise and monitor the Education Scotland reports through this report.

#### 4. Coulhill Primary Inspection

4.1 A team from HMI (Education Scotland) visited Coulhill Primary School during week beginning 4 March 2019. The report on this visit was published on 30 April 2019 and is available [here](#), on the Education Scotland website. The report covers the experience of children in the school and in the Early learning and childcare (ELC) setting.

4.2 During the visit, members from the visiting team met children, parents/carers and staff as well as the Head Teacher and the Depute Head Teachers, focusing on the Quality Indicators (QIs) from *How Good is Our School?* (4<sup>th</sup> Edition) and *How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare?* The visiting team also observed learning and teaching in all of the classrooms and in the ELC setting during the inspection. Surveys of young people, parents and staff were carried out by the inspection team and the results of these surveys can be found [here](#).

4.3 At the end of the inspection activity, a feedback session was held, led by the Managing Inspector and attended by the Head Teacher, the Depute Head Teachers, the school's Quality Improvement Officer, Mr Donald Paterson, and the Area Education Quality Improvement Manager, Mrs Stephanie Wood. At this session, the inspection team described the school's strengths, as follows:

- The positive start made by senior leaders in driving much needed improvement in the school and nursery class. They recognise changes that are required and are beginning to introduce systems and approaches to deliver them.
- Children who are eager to learn, motivated and participate well in their learning. They have a pride in their school.
- Staff who know the children well and who demonstrate positive interactions which has helped create a caring ethos and climate. As a result, children feel that they are treated fairly and with respect.

4.4 The inspection team also identified some key areas for the school to work on. These areas were identified as follows:

- All staff in the school and nursery working together with children, parents and partners, should identify and drive forward improvement priorities.
- Improve the quality of learning, teaching and assessment by developing a shared understanding of what high quality practice looks like.
- Strengthen how staff in the school and ELC setting meet children's needs. In doing this develop staff understanding of wellbeing, equality and inclusion.
- Raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. To do this, staff need to develop a clearer understanding of standards, expectations and progression in learning.

The school has already developed a plan to address these areas for improvement and has begun to implement changes to ensure progress in these areas. The full School Improvement Plan for session 2019/20, drawn up by the school's Senior Management Team (SMT) in consultation with the

Donald Paterson, QIO, and Arlene Wilson, the Scottish Government Attainment Adviser, is designed to bring about the improvements identified as necessary by the HMI team (see also 3.8 below).

4.5 During a full inspection such as this one at Coulhill Primary School, HMI report against four specific Quality Indicators (which relate to the priorities of the National Improvement Framework) and evaluate the school's performance in these Indicators. In the case of Coulhill Primary School the evaluations were as follows:

Leadership of Change - Satisfactory  
Learning, teaching and assessment – Satisfactory  
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - Weak  
Raising attainment and achievement – Weak

For the ELC setting, the evaluations were as follows:

Leadership of Change - Satisfactory  
Learning, teaching and assessment – Satisfactory  
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion - Weak  
Securing children's progress – Satisfactory

4.6 Fuller documents, each known as the Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF), are published on the Education Scotland website [here](#) for the school and [here](#) for the ELC setting. These documents are designed to provide schools with much more detail about the inspection conclusions to help with future work, and also contain some more specific information about attainment.

4.7 Some of the key additional positive points made in the SIFs relating to the main QIs were:

- The recently appointed leadership team has a clear vision for the way forward for the school and nursery.
- The improvements in communication brought about by the new Senior Management Team and the wider school community have been welcomed.
- The school is part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) schools' programme and the school's plans clearly indicate intended improvement relating to outcomes for children, planned interventions and measures of success.
- Most lessons provide clear instructions and explanations and are clearly structured. Teachers and practitioners use a variety of tasks and activities to engage children.
- In the ELC setting, the children's individual learning journey records are regularly accessed by parents and carers.
- Improvements in tracking learners' progress were identified in the school and ELC setting.
- Exclusions have reduced in recent years.
- Emotional check-ins support children and help to prepare them to learn.
- Staff in the school are responsive to the health and wellbeing needs of the community.
- Attendance rates are improving due to collaborative work between the schools' SMT and families. In the feedback session this work was highly praised.

- In the ELC setting, individual care plans include detailed information about children's needs and specific strategies where children require additional support.
- Evidence from children's individual learning journeys, overviews and trackers demonstrates that children have made satisfactory progress in their learning (literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing) since starting in the ELC setting.

4.8 Some of the key additional areas for the school to work on identified in the SIF were:

- There is a need to revisit the school's vision, values and aims in consultation with the wider school community.
- The SMT acknowledge that developing approaches to self-evaluation across the school is a priority.
- Staff should now work more effectively as a team in driving forward improvement priorities and build on their own existing strengths through professional learning. There is scope for practitioners in the ELC setting to have opportunities to undertake leadership roles.
- Further opportunities could be found to enhance pupil voice for all children.
- More opportunities should be found for children to lead and take responsibility for their own learning.
- There should be more consistency of pace and challenge.
- There is considerable scope to develop the use of digital technology more fully to enhance learning (the Chromebook roll-out will help with this).
- There is scope to develop approaches to formative assessment which will enable staff to more effectively plan next steps in learning.
- There is a need for staff to use clear progression pathways to ensure children build on previous learning as they move through the school.
- Further work is required on implementing strategies to meet the needs of children, including more effective collaborative partnership working.
- There is a need for prompt, structured and planned action to ensure recording and monitoring of children's health and wellbeing is effective.
- Further professional learning is required to ensure that staff and children have a good understanding of all forms of equality and diversity.
- More work needs to be done to ensure staff work with National benchmarks and other schools to develop a shared understanding of standards.
- There is a need for the school to develop approaches to tracking wider achievement.

These additional points for action are also addressed in the school's Improvement plan for session 2019/20, and some have already been overtaken.

4.9 As a result of the inspection findings the HMI team concluded that the school needs additional support and more time to make necessary improvements. Education Scotland will liaise with The Highland Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. HMI will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of the report (i.e. by 30 April 2020). Education Scotland will discuss with The Highland Council the details of this inspection.

- 4.10 Following the inspection, the Quality Improvement Officer for the school, Donald Paterson, has continued to work with the Head Teacher and SMT as they work on implementing the improvements indicated in the HMI report. Further support has been provided by the Scottish Government Attainment Adviser, Arlene Wilson, who liaises with the school because it is part of the SAC schools programme. This joint working will allow for a detailed progress report to be compiled at the mid-point between the publication of the HMI report and the revisit (i.e. by the end of October 2019).

Designation:

Date: 19 July 2019

Author: Steph Wood (EQIM, Mid Area)

Background Papers: Education Scotland report on visit to Coulhill Primary School, which can be found [here](#), and more detailed Summarised Inspection findings, which can be found [here](#) for the school and [here](#) for the ELC setting.