

**KEITH GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**1. Quality Educational Experience**

**1.1 Attainment**

The Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) which have now been collected for three years, presents a variable trend in both Literacy and Numeracy at Third Level and Fourth Level. Attainment levels are below the Moray and National average for all aspects of Literacy and Numeracy at Third Level with Fourth Level Literacy in all aspects and Third Level Literacy in Writing displaying an improving trend.

The school continues to focus on some aspects of assessment and moderation and this should be a main emphasis within the Associated Schools Group (ASG) to ensure teacher professional judgement of standards is in place across stages. BGE tracking is in place within the school and senior leaders should ensure that this is fully embedded and shared with staff; this will provide opportunity for professional discussion and an agreed understanding of tracking used for improving attainment and aspiration within the school. This would be further enhanced by more developed use and analysis of Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) information; this would link the range of evidence in place to ensure that the use of data for analysis and improvement planning is developed as a more strategic focus in the school. The data submitted to the local authority for national input does tend to be more cautious and further moderation would ensure that this become more reliable and correlates appropriately with progression of attainment in the Senior Phase for that cohort.

Attainment within the Senior Phase is variable and driven very much by the ability of the cohort which is more evident within a small school. S4 attainment for session 2017/18 was disappointing and while Level 4 and 5 Literacy has fluctuated over the previous four years, Level 4 Literacy attainment compares favourably with Moray and National averages for the session; there is work to do to ensure that more pupils have the opportunity to achieve Level 5. Numeracy in S4 is declining at Level 4 and 5 and is below National averages according to Insight data. Changes to the curriculum and the use of enhanced tracking data will provide the ability to close these Literacy and Numeracy attainment gaps.

S5 and S6 Literacy at Levels 4 and 5 fluctuate and most recently are below the Moray average; Numeracy in S5 and S6 is above Moray and Virtual Comparator (VC) averages at Level 4 although Level 5 is less consistent. Pupil progress and initiatives in place should be rigorously monitored to ensure positive improvement in this area which will lead to a more consistent level of attainment.

SQA examination results present an overall positive picture for the highest attaining S5 learners and some S6 pupils; this compares well with comparator measures. The number of pupils achieving at least one Advanced Higher has improved vastly in session 2017/18. Other areas of attainment in S5 and S6 should be carefully monitored with regard to curricular provision and course choice opportunity.

Attainment does not show positive trends over the last 3 years and is particularly variable in a number of areas. There is a need to ensure existing tracking processes are improved and the data is used by all staff to implement a range of support interventions and the impact of this to be a standing item on department and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) agendas. There should be a focus on the consistency of learning and teaching approaches including learning conversations within classes along with potential target setting approaches to help raise attainment.

The most recent data for the percentage of leavers in an initial positive destination (session 2016/17) presents a fairly consistent trend over the last 4 years; the school should continue to use the Pathway Planning Meetings and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) initiatives effectively to ensure that the school leavers are represented favourably in line with comparator measures.

## 1.2 Wider school activities

A wide range of clubs are organised for lunchtimes and after school. The investment was made to run a “late bus” for students wishing to participate in after-school activities to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to participate. Activities are organised by departments or by individuals (many of them supportive of subjects other than their own discipline) and importance is placed on maintaining the interest and engagement of all. A wide range of interests is covered, such as Scrabble, rowing, dodgeball, the ROV Challenge, Duke of Edinburgh, Debating and the Charity Challenge.

Twice weekly “Chill and Spill” lunchtime is available, sometimes to all, sometimes by invitation, and gives students opportunity to spend time in a relaxed and safe place. Organised by the School’s Inclusion Co-ordinator, pupils can talk through issues at the same time as engaging in a game of air hockey, pool, table football, chess, table-top games or just sitting in comfy armchairs. This has enabled pupils to have a place where they can be relaxed which helps them cope better with lessons.

Creative Club operates in an adjacent location to Chill and Spill. In the art room, pupils engage in painting, drawing, crafts or photography – the choice is theirs and the teacher provides guidance and challenge in an engaging and less formal way. This has a positive impact on the pupils’ health and well-being by enabling them to focus on something out-with their usual school day.

Supporting charities is central to the community based values of the school and students choose both the charity to support, often with personal reasons,

and the fundraising approaches which creates a positive sense of how they can help less fortunate people in their community and beyond. This sense of generosity gives a positive sense of well-being. This year the pupil choice is Teenage Cancer, and students have a range of ideas up and running bringing in useful funds. There is a proactive engagement with various forms of voluntary work, promoting opportunity both locally and across the world. This year the World Challenge expedition is to India, and information is readily available with engaging noticeboards further advertising the expedition and it is envisaged that this will be enthusiastically received by the school community.

Various groups operate with the aim of engaging students for social and developmental purposes so that they can have opportunity to have experiences which enable them to be challenged to aid their personal and social skills development. The debate club is a healthy framework for encouraging diverse opinions and negotiations, and learners are articulate about the skills they are developing linked to the Career Education Standard and the Moray Skills Pathway. They are clear about the transferable learning that links to the world of work and their future adult life.

Students and staff place significance on Student Voice, and articulate how the school has taken seriously issues such as the need to support student wellbeing. A breakfast club opens daily, supplying free food, and widely advertised across the school for pupils and staff to enjoy a healthy start to the day, which is also a good opportunity for a check-in which promotes emotional and mental health and well-being.

### 1.3 ASN provision

The ASN department's vision is to create "a safe, inclusive environment" (throughout the school) "in which the pupils we support can become confident, independent, and resilient and reach their full potential" Keith Grammar has an inclusive ethos where all learners are valued. This is demonstrated by appropriate curricular provision and a clear awareness of the needs of every pupil. There is active collaboration and joint working between the ASN department, SLT, subject departments, and Guidance staff teams in order to support all pupils in class, both socially and emotionally.

Pupils are supported well both in school and by the community using a multi-agency approach. The Sensory Education Service and Moray SEBN Service were identified as services that are currently engaged in providing direct support and also allied professionals such as Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy and Social Work teams are evidenced through the child planning process. Pupils also make use of well-established community links such as the Loft Youth Project, PEF Family Support Worker and Home-school Link workers, Riding for the Disabled and local sports facilities and providers. Also in evidence were the strong links with partner primary schools particularly in sharing inclusive strategies and enable positive transitions. Transition experiences from P7 is a strength with meetings at primary schools for young people starting as early as P5 or P6 in some cases. Pupil's experience small

chunks of learning in the secondary school and gradually build relationships with staff across the wider curricular areas. Transitions between year groups and flexibility within curricular choice is enabled by an inclusive ethos across the school and facilitated by the ASN department. Pupil and parent trust in these processes is clearly evident.

Pupil needs are identified at transition and then monitored throughout, using pupil tracking and monitoring, staged intervention and child planning and review. There are strong links made with parents at transition and maintained using the above processes. Pupils were less aware of their own profiles, child planning and target setting systems but agreed that they were supported and felt included. SEEMIs is used to share pupil information. The Moray-wide Learner Profile and Strategies documentation is also being used to support pupil achievement. There is a school Staged Intervention Pathway for accessing support which encourages all staff to consider approaches to learning and teaching as part of meeting a child's needs.

Inclusive approaches to learning and teaching were observed in mainstream classes and teachers demonstrated that they understood the needs of the pupils. This was apparent in the Senior Phase and in a variety of settings for the S1 supported class. This has been achieved by a developing a Flexible Curriculum. This adds great value to the school in meeting learner's needs. Curriculum adaptation is based on understanding each individual's curricular profile through pupil tracking and monitoring and their barriers to learning. The ASN department works alongside subject departments to understand literacy and numeracy and curricular levels for each pupil enabling appropriate targeted support to be provided. This is delivered using a variety of resources and settings in Enhanced Provision and mainstream classes. Milestones and early curriculum planning tools are being used, with the aim to develop these further. In addition, there are opportunities for alternative curricular activities such as SQA Personal Development Awards, Skills for Work and Youth achievement awards, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, ASDAN, Swimming, Outdoor Learning, Themed Learning and Riding for the Disabled. These enhance the CfE provision and allow for a broad range of interests and abilities whilst also providing appropriate challenge and support. Social times are also scaffolded to include all pupils including the lunchtime "Chill and Spill" club, lunchtime provision in the ASN department and other regular clubs frequently advertised through the pupil daily and weekly notices.

There is good practice in the use of assistive technology throughout the school. This is evident in the use of i-Pads for literacy difficulties and in the training and development opportunities for pupils and staff in the use of assistive technology in SQA examinations. To this end pupil feedback was positive about how technology is used to assist learning.

Other feedback from pupils evidenced that they feel well supported and listened to and that they have a voice in school. However they felt that class teachers did not know enough about their individual barriers to learning, such as Dyslexia.

ASN resources are allocated according to need and to enable the flexible curriculum. This is reviewed frequently to enable continuity and flexibility to meet needs. The ASN department has recently upgraded accessible toilet facilities. There is a small kitchen area but has limited soft play and physio space which is in high demand and not always ready for use. There is a working lift in the main building providing access to the upstairs classrooms. However, fire regulations and staffing restrictions has deemed the risk too great for wheelchair users to access the top floor. There is no access to the top floor in the annexe buildings for wheelchair users.

The ASN department is small and often relies on one main teaching space for a variety of activities. This is not always conducive to good teaching and learning due to competing pressures from individuals needs and learning experiences. The ASN department makes good use of the HE room situated next door and whilst it serves a purpose, it is not designed for small group ASN teaching.

#### 1.4 Curriculum

The curriculum at Keith Grammar School is based on the foundation of the school's Curriculum Rationale which was developed collaboratively in 2015 and will be reviewed in the near future to take account of changes which have happened since then, especially in terms of Skills for Life, Work and Learning. At Keith Grammar School Priority 1 is the 'Curriculum including Literacy and Numeracy with a key focus on revisions to curriculum structure in light of this being the first year of the transition to the 33-period week. This includes a continued focus on Literacy and Numeracy to ensure pupils leave school with a basic level of qualification, the aspiration being at least Level 4 for all leavers.

The school has worked hard to develop a more bespoke range of Learner Pathways through school and beyond endeavouring to boost attainment and secure more positive destinations for pupils by expanding the offer of, for example, the DYW programme. This has been done by having a greater range of courses and activities and more time for Literacy, Numeracy and Science as well as Universal Pupil Support (UPS) which is called Aspiring, Achieving, Attaining (AAA) for Senior Phase pupils. There is now more time for National courses in the Senior Phase which will allow more time to consolidate learning and help prepare for the next level for each learner. This is supported by earlier initial subject choice procedures which assist in better planning for pupils and includes an S2-S3 Subject Fair the aim of which is to link career pathways to subject choice procedures. Another area of progress has been the continued development of IDL Challenge lessons which has increased personalisation and choice. All of the above ensures an appropriately broad and balanced BGE curriculum reflective of CfE design principles and developing stronger progression pathways into Senior Phase. A range of courses and qualifications to SCQF Level 7 are offered in Senior Phase with widened learner choice including College courses and a range courses such as Rural Skills, Hospitality, Photography, Practical Woodwork,

Engineering Science, Travel and Tourism, Community Sports Leader Award, and Open University YASS courses in German, Spanish and French.

Keith Grammar School is continuing to develop the curriculum in terms of assessment, progression and reporting of learner progress. This includes further work being required in Responsibility of All (RoA - Literacy, Numeracy, and HWB) where staff should be encouraged to look outwards to experience good practice and use this to improve the provision within their own school. Additional work on assessment and moderation within the school and ASG in these key areas will further strengthen RoA practice across the school. There has been the introduction of discrete Literacy and Numeracy periods in S1 and S2 along with two periods of Challenge Inter Disciplinary Learning. Through the AAA periods the ongoing focus and continued review of individual student progress will ensure that the Literacy/Numeracy attainment levels of pupils will be monitored and addressed.

In S1 to S3, all students follow a Broad General Education which follows on from their primary educational experience. Breadth and depth in learning is experienced across the eight curricular areas with the opportunity to study in modern languages, for example, French, German, Spanish or Scots. Towards the end of S2 pupils are encouraged to choose subjects from all curricular areas which must include a Modern Foreign Language. This wide range of subjects available in S3 based on meeting pupils' needs could be better used to ensure that the aspiration in S3 is to be working at or have completed Level 4 by the end of the year. This would ensure that Level 5 is a reasonable aspiration of pupils by the end of S4. The UPS course and its further development with the PSE course will provide opportunities for learners to liaise with supportive adults who know them well and can model success.

In S4-S6, there is personalisation and choice where all students are encouraged to follow six courses or combinations of activities so that they can experience challenge and enjoyment in their educational experience. Learners take on the options which are available although vacancies in a couple of departments have limited choice somewhat. Positive destination figures reflect the unique context of Keith Grammar School where many pupils leave to take up employment or College courses at the end of S4. This is done in partnership with other schools, Colleges, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) (Careers) and the private and public sectors. During their last year of school learners meet with Guidance and SDS (Careers) staff to identify the optimum pathway for the next stage of their career paths. This is enhanced by mentoring with staff volunteers where Guidance staff identify young people who may benefit from this type of support.

The school has been increasingly engaging with the DYW agenda and the SLT will need to ensure that this is kept on the front-foot with greater involvement of staff in terms of distributed leadership. There are good relationships with local employers where pupils go out on placement with local employers on a regular basis ranging from half-a-day to two days per week. This offer is enhanced by NHS Grampian's high quality work experience

placements which last from two to five days. The school is part of the Career Ready scheme, with mentoring, internships and masterclasses offered to 6 students in the current S5 and 10 in the current S6. The school has given pupils access to more in the way of vocational opportunities through courses and work experience. This is supported by partners in the Senior Phase which, with an increased awareness of Career Management Skills, will help pupils better utilise their experiences and increase their level of work readiness.

## 1.5 Learning & Teaching

Most pupils were well behaved, attentive and enjoyed good relationships with staff. In a few classes, low level disruption and inconsistency in the application of the behaviour system impacted on the fluency of lessons. There were well established routines in most classes, although some lessons were slow to start which impacted on the pace of learning. In a few lessons, the use of starter questions was used effectively to recap on prior learning with effective questioning probing pupil understanding. In the majority of lessons, pupils were actively engaged in independent tasks with opportunities to take responsibility for their learning. In less than half of lessons observed, learning intentions and success criteria were shared with learners. Where success criteria were shared, they were not co-created with learners. Learners were confident in offering answers, were well supported and knew that they could seek help if required. Pupils spoke highly of study club and how teachers were always keen to provide support. There are many opportunities for young people to contribute to the life of the school and wider community in a range of opportunities and activities.

Although it was clear that this is a school where learners and staff work together, teaching across the school was not underpinned by the school values. There is a need for greater aspiration and expectations alongside more pace and differentiation within lessons to improve pupil progress and attainment. Pupils with additional support needs benefited from well planned and differentiated learning. Less than half of lessons were teacher led, with pupils frustrated that explanations were too lengthy, leaving little time for completing tasks. Learners feel supported by their teachers and are happy to approach a member of staff when they require help. Almost all learning environments are welcoming although a few are cluttered and do not provide visual stimulus to aid learners. Wall displays around the school would benefit from updating. In most lessons explanations and instructions were clear. There were a few lessons where digital technology was enhancing learning. Learning conversations were evident across the school with learners more aware of how to improve in subject areas. The introduction of Universal Pupil Support (AAA) lessons provided further opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and any concerns they may have.

Formative assessment approaches were not embedded in practice in the school. Teachers should consider a range of assessment approaches when planning learning in order that learners are better able to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and skills acquired. Learners could not confidently

explain the why of their learning and were unclear of the relevance of learning across the school in relation to the world of work. Pupils reported that work was too easy or repetitive in some lessons. There was little evidence, during the visit, of learner involvement in the planning of learning.

Tracking and monitoring of pupil progress has been established across the school departments and now needs to be used more effectively to monitor pupil progress at class teacher level and use data to plan interventions to raise attainment and close the poverty related attainment gap.

#### 1.6 School buildings

Condition: standard C (2018)

Suitability: standard B (2018)

The school was largely built in 1965 and is in a reasonable condition given its age due to refurbishment under the current Headteacher. The standard of facilities within the school is quite good with large classrooms, a conference room, a large staffroom, library resource centre, communal areas, halls and outdoor spaces. The entrance has been recently refurbished with a disabled access ramp and door. This area is welcoming and has a visitor waiting area. There are issues around accessibility particularly with respect to access to the Modern Languages department and the Sixth Year Common Area. There are concerns around the remote location of the canteen and Music and Modern Languages departments as they are situated away from the main school building. The PE department uses the Community Centre games hall and swimming pool to ensure there is enough space to accommodate pupil physical education. The school outside areas are used for outdoor learning opportunities and comprise of a 3G all-weather enclosed football pitch with flood-lights and three grass football pitch sized areas. The school is generally well resourced and offers good learning areas and facilities.

#### 1.7 Pastoral Care

Keith Grammar is a caring, nurturing and welcoming school that has a very strong sense of community. The children, parents and staff all commented on its inclusive approach that made it feel 'like a family.' Positive relationships were evident in most classroom observations and learning walks. Parents felt communication links were very good and that the "open door" policy and continuous information via Twitter, newsletters and the Keith Grammar School website helped maintain this.

Pupil Support is a major strength. The Pupil Support team, with the support of the Senior Leadership Team, are highly committed to ensuring children's wellbeing is placed at the centre of everything they do. Up to this point, Keith Grammar has managed to ensure the caseloads of Principal Teachers of Guidance are kept low despite a falling school roll. This has been further supplemented by the appointment of an Inclusion Project Co-ordinator, Home School Link Worker and an ASG PEF Family Support Worker. Bespoke support packages and plans are put in place at a very early stage to ensure the individual needs of pupils are being addressed. Robust processes to

identify issues around attendance, lateness, and behaviour were evident and effective multi-agency meetings are held on a regular basis to discuss in more detail young people who are at risk or who would benefit from additional supports. An extensive transition programme, involving all partners, provided pupils and parents with the necessary support required for a seamless transition from P7 to S1. Senior Buddies were an integral part of this process and praised for their input by both pupils and parents. In response to a pupil and parent survey, the Personal and Social Education programme had been revised to ensure it was progressive and responsive to the “asks” of the children. The UPS periods are beginning in some areas to provide learners with individualised support and the opportunity for learning conversations.

Staged intervention is understood by class teachers but continues to be an area for development to ensure learners’ needs are fully supported and health and wellbeing is seen as the Responsibility of All. Low level behaviour issues and inconsistent application of the behaviour system was evident during most classroom observations. Development of the relational school, and in particular the Relationship Policy, will provide a framework for building capacity and ensuring progress in these areas. Mentoring and Peer Mediators were examples given by pupils of good practice, but these programmes require to be refreshed and relaunched. Bullying was not identified as a major issue; however, pupils were familiar with the Keith Anti-Bullying (KAB) phone line, which was designed as a creative way for tackling bullying so pupils could report any concerns or incidents without delay.

#### 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

2017/18 Attendance rate: 91.88% (Moray 94.9%).

Violence/Aggression against staff: One incident recorded involving one individual during 2017/18.

There were 10 exclusion incidents involving 8 different individuals in session 2017/18.

Keith Grammar operates a relational approach when dealing with pupils behaviour which is a positive approach. This approach aims to: avoid apportioning blame and shame; encourage positive relationships with all in school which promotes success for all; lead up towards our goal, which is to make our school where our young people can be ‘Responsible’, ‘Respectful’, ‘Aspirational’ and ‘Healthy’; and protect the rights of each pupil to learn and achieve.

## 2. School roll

### 2.1 Roll and roll forecast

The School Roll in 2018/19 is 379 pupils. Since 2013, the roll has decreased by 83 (from 462 to 379).

Forecasted roll: 2026 – 443 pupils.

### 2.2 Inward placing requests

Net placings over last 3 years: 2016/17: 3,  
2017/18: 2, 2018/19: 0;

- 2.3 Outward placing requests  
2018/19: 7 outward placing requests.
- 2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity  
2018/19 School Roll: 379 which is 69% of physical capacity of 553.
- 2.5 Class composition  
N/A
- 2.6 Number of teachers  
FTE – 34 (38 staff)  
Includes 18 teachers, 17 Principal teachers (includes 2 X 0.5 FTE job-share), 2 Depute Headteachers and 1 Headteacher.
- 2.7 School roll  
2017/18 School Roll: 379.
- 2.8 Maximum Capacity  
2017/18 – School Roll 379, 69% – Physical Capacity of 553.
- 3. Financial position**
- 3.1 Budgeted running cost  
The cost per pupil in 2018/19 is £6,315.
- 3.2 Financial trends  
School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 3.79% underspend which was restricted to 2.5% = £62,006.
- 3.3 Financial plans  
The school has a healthy budget and the headteacher has used this in a variety of innovative and successful ways to promote and support the school improvement which includes the upgrading of areas of the school.

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the evaluations of criteria 1-3 Keith Grammar School is a sustainable school due to its location and the travel times permitted for pupils. The roll and enrolment forecasts are currently below the minimum roll threshold for a secondary school. Due to location and travel times there is no need to evaluate criteria 4-6 at this time.

### **Recommendations**

Due to the projected increase in school roll at Keith Grammar School, officers should monitor predictions annually to ensure that resources match demand.

A non-denominational school, Keith Grammar School covers a large catchment area.

Projections would suggest sufficient capacity in future years to meet the needs of the large school catchment area as there is a projected rise in roll over the next 7 years of approximately 64 pupils. The following options should be considered and appraised:

- Consider campus leadership 3-18 model
- Retain Keith Grammar School as per existing arrangement

### **Areas of Strengths**

- A very inclusive school environment where learners' wellbeing needs are met.
- Positive relationships within the school community supported by multi-agency and community partnerships.
- A collegiate school team who have achieved their vision of working together.
- The school has begun to develop a responsive and flexible approach to learner pathways.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- To further strengthen the strategic leadership at all levels to ensure the development of a vision for excellence.
- Develop and embed whole school approaches to self-evaluation.
- Continue to improve the consistency and quality of learning and teaching.
- To continue to improve tracking and monitoring of pupil progress to raise attainment.

# **BOTRIPHNE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **1. Quality Educational Experience**

### **1.1 Attainment**

In P1, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Achievement of a Level (ACEL) data for 2017/2018 indicates that pupils perform above Moray averages for Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing and Numeracy. In P4, ACEL data for 2017/2018 highlights that pupils perform below Moray averages for Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing and Numeracy. In P7, ACEL data indicates that children performed below Moray averages for Listening and Talking, Reading and Writing. Children achieved above the Moray average for Numeracy. SNSA data is being used to assist teachers with their professional judgements.

Through discussion with the Headteacher and staff, confidence in Teacher Professional Judgment (TPJ) of learner level achievement as per the Scottish Government's data return requirement for key stages (P1, P4, P7) is increasing. Staff have used collegiate time well, engaging with National Benchmarks and participating in cross moderation activities within Associated Schools Group (ASG) and a sub group of the ASG i.e. Quad Schools (two paired schools and in addition one other school). This includes cross-sector moderation with Keith Grammar School for moderation of Writing and aspects of Mathematics and Numeracy.

The school has adopted Tracking and Monitoring of learner attainment and achievement, supported by the local authority Tracking and Monitoring spreadsheet tools. The Headteacher is confident that the predictions for 2019 of achievement of a level are based on a more robust evidence base and are supported by teachers' clearer professional judgement which has been focussed through aligning the National Benchmarks to curricular progressions and plans. The Headteacher is confident that curricular progressions and plans for literacy and numeracy will soon be in place.

The school has identified a range of targeted and universal interventions as detailed in the School Improvement Plan with a clear focus on raising attainment in Literacy (Emerging Literacy, Reading Challenge, Talk Boost and 5 Minute Boxes). Additional support staff hours have been funded using PEF monies in order to improve the learning and achievement of targeted individuals identified. PEF monies have also supported the purchase of resources to support these interventions.

### **1.2 Wider school activities**

The school values and vision display is used in the central learning area as a focus for pupils. This is also the focus of school assemblies where achievements are recognised and pupils learn that their contributions fit with national education priorities as well as within their local and school community. Most children are learning to build resilience and confidence

through the shared values and meaningful reflections, alongside developing responsible social skills through the bucket filling principles. Most senior pupils are able to articulate their understanding of the vision and values of the school.

Clubs are organised for lunchtimes and all pupils have the opportunity to participate. Activities are organised by the teachers in response to the interest and engagement of the children. Currently the clubs taking place are *Running* and *Coding*, and pupils speak enthusiastically about participating. Fewer activities run after school as most of the children rely on the transport provided by local authority funding, and therefore, lunchtimes are preferred as being fully inclusive.

Each year all children are transported to Cairngorm for skiing lessons. Fundraising ensures that all pupils can access this free of charge, and it is therefore integral to the PE curriculum and evidenced by year on year progression.

Almost all senior pupils engage in various activities organised by the ASG, rural schools or Active Schools Coordinator e.g. Science and Engineering Day, author visits, inter-school sports and tournaments. In addition, transition activities across the Keith Associated School Group include attendance at the Loft which is a P7 programme to support social relationships prior to moving to the high school.

### 1.3 ASN provision

At this time, of the school roll (24 pupils), 10 are registered with additional support needs on SEEMiS equating to 43% of the school roll, well above the Moray Primary School average (33% - 2017/2018). Within this number there is dedicated support for a child with Exceptional Needs Funding. The Support for Learning teacher (0.2FTE) is allocated to the school one day each week. She focuses on tracking and monitoring the pupils with additional support needs, and also supports the Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) and teaching staff. The school uses the ASN Staged Intervention model to identify, across both classes, the range of pupils' needs and next steps for learning. Support staff work flexibly within classes and also extract pupils to undertake various interventions. Learner profiles are completed using the Moray standard profile for all pupils with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and staff meet with parents for consultation in the identification of extra support, sharing a range of assessments and strategies. There has been a particular focus on closing the attainment gap through small groups of children being withdrawn from class to focus on literacy and numeracy skills. A number of children have Individualised Education Plans (IEPs) that are well written with SMART targets. These are reviewed regularly with parents and pupils who are involved in agreeing the targets. Staff spoke positively about the introduction of intervention programmes like 'Talk Boost' and 'The Five Minute Boxes' to accelerate learning. Updates about pupils' wellbeing and learning are undertaken via verbal communication between the Headteacher, teachers and PSAs. The Headteacher centrally records health and wellbeing concerns, using the

Moray agreed protocol. Enhanced transition to secondary school is personalised where necessary and begins in P6 for some children, with three days in P7 for all pupils transitioning with identified additional support needs.

The buildings and grounds are all fully accessible for wheelchair users, but some structures are also in place to support the need, for instance, the ramped access at the entrance and the toilet facilities. There are no pupils with this need at present. Recent changes to the classroom environments are being monitored to check whether they are conducive to learning for pupils with sensory and physical needs. The sharing of the larger space can be distracting for some and this could have implications for children with additional needs.

The school is inclusive, caring and supportive of pupils and their families. Complex needs and strategies are well known across the staff team and all pupils are sensitive and caring in their relationships with one another.

#### 1.4 Curriculum

At the time of the visit, 24 pupils were organised into two multi-composite classes (P1-4 and P5-7) providing for a rich social experience. They were supported in lessons through planned and rotating working groups and the provision of independent, or PSA led, activities.

Health and Wellbeing is a central focus of the curriculum and the school's vision of "From Acorns to Mighty Oaks" provides for a focus on behaviour, socialisation and motivation. Most children are prepared for learning, responsible and articulate about their own wellbeing, including mental health. Almost all children are supported in a range of ways to explore the aspects of the Wellbeing indicators, and a few of them were able to report with confidence that they are working on those aspects they find personally more challenging.

Numeracy and Literacy are a primary focus of daily lessons, supported by the passport system to develop independent choice of learning. The rotating groups allow for separate planning for different age/ability groups, and the new passport system is designed to allow personal progression through the wider curriculum. Teachers change the details of the passports termly and these are tracked against the Experiences and Outcomes to ensure coverage. Additionally, the passports are colour coded so that pupils can see they are working within a Curriculum for Excellence Level – Early, First or Second levels, and can identify their progress as they move through the school.

Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Creativity and the Careers Education Standard, are specific within the curriculum and pupils have the support of practical science sessions through the engagement with the Moray Council STEM strategy.

The curriculum in Botriphnie is rich in context. The school is within the Drummur Woods and the outdoor environment is a key feature of learning. Outside woodland areas are used in a range of ways and pupils spoke

enthusiastically of their curriculum developing with the local area. Earthtime lessons focus pupil learning on outdoor conservation and personal responsibility issues as well as being enormously enjoyable. Currently, there is a great deal of traffic congestion in the nearby town of Keith, caused by work on the old feature bridge over the River Isla. In response to this the Interdisciplinary Learning Project focus is “Bridges” and children are working both indoors and outdoors to develop their understanding of the engineering and socio-economic impact of bridges.

Community engagement with the curriculum is a feature of the developing rationale and the school has invited community partners into school to share their work e.g. Bear Scotland made a presentation about winter traffic. They ran a competition during their visit to “name a gritter” and the winning child will have their choice name on a gritter and will be invited to have a photo session with the gritter.

The school is in a paired relationship, sharing the Headteacher with Newmill Primary School. Staff are able to take advantage of the close relationship to develop many areas of the curriculum. Joint planning opportunities with the other Keith small schools, also ensures that the children of Botriphnie have similar experiences in preparation for secondary school, such as that which is developed by the Active Schools Coordinator.

## 1.5 Learning & Teaching

During our time at Botriphnie Primary School, a full programme of classroom visits was undertaken and each class was visited at least twice. During visits, learning and teaching activities were observed; jotter samples and floor books were viewed; and learners engaged in conversation about their learning.

Botriphnie Primary School is a very welcoming and positive environment for learning. Classroom walls, corridors and learning spaces are used well to display the children’s growing awareness and understanding of the school’s recently reviewed and agreed vision and values as well as developing their understanding and language of learning. Further use of extensive wall space would showcase children’s own achievements better egg writing, art pieces, reports on independent learning etc.

The open-plan environment for two classes is still in the early stages of use for two teaching members of staff and a review of progress should consider competing noise levels, access to interactive whiteboard and appropriately timed extraction of pupils to engage in targeted interventions. The smaller learning space accommodates quieter areas for one-to-one support and Independent Learning Time. The canteen/general purpose area also accommodates one-to-one targeted support times.

Across the school, a positive ethos for learning was evident, with most children motivated and on task in most lessons observed. Some low level disruption and noise was evident, but most children were on task and

teachers remained calm when seeking appropriate standards. Teachers across classes work well to plan a range of learning activities, involving support staff as appropriate in lessons. Whilst most teaching staff are in the early stages of their time at Botriphnie Primary School, the ethos and culture of learning alongside a new school vision and values is being promoted.

Across the classes, the majority of children understood the purpose of their learning, and were accessing learning at a level appropriate to them. Learning Intentions were evident in most lessons observed and within one learning area this was differentiated across two levels. For continuity across the different stages agreed use of acronyms/abbreviations to share learning will be helpful.

Children have regular opportunities to use digital technology to enhance their learning in accessing a wide range of software and accessing websites for research. In one teaching area an interactive whiteboard is used to enhance learning and teaching e.g. share video clips, appropriate texts and learning plans.

An Outdoor programme of learning in the local woods is led by Earthtime but the school is seeking to build up staff skills to ensure this is sustainable in the longer term. This is a time which is valued by the whole school community and is identified as a rich learning opportunity.

#### 1.6 School buildings

Condition: minimum standard C (2017)

Suitability: minimum standard B (2017)

Botriphnie Primary School is a non-denominational school, situated within the Village of Drummur. The school, which has been in existence since 1875, was upgraded in 2000. All accommodation is contained within the original Victorian building. Current school accommodation includes a large teaching area, a smaller teaching area, a small canteen/multi-purpose area with servery. The school does not have a hall but access is gained, by arrangement, to the Village Hall which is situated next door. The school is proud of the resources they have secured and in particular for ICT including interactive Promethean boards.

Externally, the school has a tarmacadam play area and various playground resources stored in sturdy sheds.

There are currently 2 composite classes formed for the 24 pupils of Botriphnie Primary School. The school currently shares a Headteacher with Newmill Primary School and is a two teacher school with children from P1-7.

#### 1.7 Pastoral Care

Botriphnie Primary School has a very positive and welcoming ethos both within the playground and in the classroom. This is reflected in the way adults and pupils interact with each other both inside and outwith the classroom. Most pupils show their understanding of the school values through their interactions with each other and with staff.

All staff deal sensitively with the needs and concerns of pupils. A major strength of the school is the nurturing environment. Almost all children feel supported by all school staff and know who to go to if they have a problem. It is evident that all staff know pupils well, including their specific needs. Most children report that they feel very safe in school and can talk to any member of staff as they are all so approachable. Pupils reported a strong sense of belonging and are very proud of their school. All support staff are highly regarded and included within the school community. The valuable contribution they make to the school and in supporting pupils is widely recognised. They are particularly proactive in sharing information regarding any concerns so it is passed on in a timely manner to all other members of staff, including teachers and Headteacher.

The wellbeing indicators are used effectively as a tool for reflection by staff and children. There are spaces allocated within the learning environments where pupils can take time for their own calm reflections. Whilst we did not see these in use during the visit, there was a calm and inclusive atmosphere across the whole of the school. Restorative and solution-oriented approaches are adopted by staff when dealing with any issues that arise with pupils, and a personal approach is always adopted.

The staff team place significance on pupil wellbeing. A check in with a Pupil Support Assistant each morning gives pupils the opportunity to share both concerns and achievements and engage in a meaningful conversation about life outside school.

Parents spoke highly of the care demonstrated by all staff and felt that Botriphnie offered their children a very positive experience.

## 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

Attendance rate: 92.96% (Moray Primary School average: 94.9%)

In 2017-18, there were no reported incidents of Violence and Aggression against staff.

There were no incidents of exclusion (2017/18).

The school is working towards finalising a "Positive Behaviour Policy" which will outline key strategies, adopt a positive behaviour reinforcement approach including using the philosophy of a Rights Respecting School, use of SHANARRI cards and using restorative approaches. Pupils feel that most children behave well and they look after one another. They identify a few children who display behaviours that make them feel less safe but they feel confident that they know the procedures to follow and where to seek help.

## 2. School roll

### 2.1 Roll and roll forecast

The school roll has increased since 2013 from 16 pupils to 24 pupils in 2018.

The school roll currently stands at 24.  
The school roll forecast for 2025 is to remain static at 24 pupils (2019 roll at time of visit).

2.2 Inward placing requests

There are no inward requests for 2018-19

2.3 Outward placing requests

There is 1 outward request for 2018-19

2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity

The school roll against Functional Capacity is 46% (23/50).

The school roll against Maximum Capacity is 35% (23/66).

2.5 Class composition

The two classes are composed of stages P1-4 and P5-7 although there are variations with regard to the groupings for learning which cross over the class stages.

2.6 Number of teachers

2 X 0.5 FTE job share teachers

1 full time Principal Teacher

1 X 0.2FTE Support for Learning Teacher

2.7 School roll

2017 School Roll: 23; Current 2018 School roll: 24

**3. Financial position**

3.1 Budgeted running cost

The cost per pupil in 2018/2019 (based on current roll: 24) is £7,200

3.2 Financial trends

School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 2.65% underspend restricted to scheme rules of 2.5%. This left an underspend of £3776 to take forward into 2018-19.

3.3 Financial plans

The Head Teacher uses devolved school budget effectively for whole school developments, linked in with school self-evaluation and School Improvement Plan Priorities. This has included, in financial year 2017-18, the purchase of North Lanarkshire Literacy, Spelling made Easy, Education City Licence, Nexus equipment and iPads. In the financial year 2018-19, the purchases included Five Minute Boxes, Education City licence, Wild Passport Resources and a play tray with covers. PEF funding has supported the purchase of targeted resources (including 'Talk Boost' training and materials and '5 minute boxes' purchases). Where appropriate, staff, pupils and parents are consulted in the resource purchases. The Parent Council raised £1128 In

2018/19 funding iPad covers, a Panto trip and outdoor learning items. The school has been well resourced historically through secured funding from Wind Farm Grants and local businesses.

#### **4. Staff Wellbeing and Development**

##### **4.1 Availability of Teachers**

After a period of uncertainty, the school is now fully staffed at this time following the appointment of a Principal Teacher in December and a job share class teacher this term. PE and Music is taught across all stages by two visiting specialists and class teachers. Art is taught by class teachers.

##### **4.2 Headteacher Relief Time**

Due to the paired schools arrangement, the Headteacher does not have a teaching commitment although due to staffing issues in both schools she has had to undertake cover for class teachers on a fairly long term basis.

##### **4.3 Leadership Capacity**

The Headteacher provides clear direction to the school around the key School Improvement priorities. All staff and pupils are consulted and empowered to lead on a range of priorities and initiatives for school improvement. 'Making a Difference' (MAD) groups meet on Wednesdays to develop a focus on Rights Respecting Schools, Creativity and Eco Schools. Parents value home-school communication and the support offered by all staff. They praise the school's focus on building a community feeling and sense of belonging across both the school itself and within the community. Until now, the Headteacher's availability to support improvements has been limited due to staffing difficulties in both schools but this has given an opportunity for the Principal Teacher to develop her role within the school.

##### **4.4 Staff Development and the Leadership of Change**

Staff lead informally on a range of priorities and initiatives and work effectively as a team. Staff are respected by pupils and parents. A focus has been placed on HWB, positive relationships, restorative and rights-respecting approaches to promote a positive culture for learning and wellbeing. Increased self-evaluation around consistency in quality of learning and teaching approaches across the school will support practitioners further in improving outcomes for all children.

Teaching staff feel that they are in the early stages of working together and as yet it has not been necessary to agree on individual leaders due to the joint working approach in evidence. Support staff recognise the positive changes implemented in collaboration with the Headteacher and Principal Teacher since their appointments and they welcome all opportunities to work together to improve outcomes for learners.

## **5. Schools Accessibility**

### **5.1 Home to school transport time**

Most pupils live within the village and surrounding area. It is anticipated that all pupils travel no more than 20 minutes to school in normal traffic.

### **5.2 Distance to another suitable school**

Nearest schools are Keith Primary School and St. Thomas RC Primary School in the town of Keith (6.3 and 7.3 miles approximate travel time respectively by road and is approximately 10-12 minutes); Newmill Primary School, the paired school, to the north east of Keith (7.1 miles approximately 13 minutes by road).

### **5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/training organisations**

Botriphnie has a paired headship with Newmill and a range of collegiate activities take place between the 2 schools. There are also co-operative working arrangements with the other Quad Schools within the ASG and the ASG schools collectively. Transition arrangements for P7-S1 and enhanced transitions for ASN pupils are in place with Keith Grammar School (6.2 miles and 10 minutes approximate travel).

## **6 Strong Links with the Community**

The school has strong links with the local community engaging positively in village life. They have a particular relationship with the local landowner and have worked together in relation to conservation and land use issues.

### **6.1 Parents' Views**

Through focus group discussion with 5 parents, parents report that they are very happy with the school and believe that all staff work tirelessly for the benefit of their children, leading a range of opportunities and activities. They particularly appreciate and applaud the way their children are treated as individuals and how their needs are met accordingly. They describe the school as having an 'open door policy', being very welcoming and recognise that there are opportunities to be consulted and become involved in the life of the school.

Partnership working with parents was identified by parents as "very good", with the Headteacher willing to listen to the voice of pupils and parents and they also felt their views were acted upon. Parents identify that support of their children is very good and they have opportunities to attend open afternoons and Pupil Led Conferences which inform them of their children's progress and next steps for learning. They identified the Reflection jotters as helpful and informative and the children's increased knowledge of their learning journey and identification of skills from Bloom's Taxonomy as laudable. Parents value the approachability of all staff in addition to the

Headteacher and they would recommend the school to others who might be considering attendance at the school.

## 6.2 Degree and Quality of Parental Involvement

The school has an active Parent Council, having organised events such as a Soup and Sweet and Hallowe'en Disco. A few parents are trained in the work of Forest Schools and others volunteer to support Outdoor Learning on Fridays. They also describe their involvement as 'as and when required' for assisting with school excursions and activities. The school recognises that it will continue to develop strategies for building meaningful parental involvement and family learning in support of raising attainment and achievement of all.

## 6.3 Contribution of the school to the community

The school curriculum is built around the context of the village and its association with the nearby town of Keith. The school is represented in the Drummur 21 actions which supports a sustainability plan for the railway and woodlands. Local businesses have close links with the school and include the Drummur Estates (landowner) who currently are promoting hedges in woodland areas and also a local building firm, who sponsor the annual skiing lessons. Both business links support the development of the curriculum. The village hall is used weekly for PE, sports and lunchtimes as well as special events. There is an active group of parents who support the school in different ways i.e. as volunteers and through fund raising and who are also invited into school to share in children's learning.

## 6.4 Other Provision (eg Nursery)

The school does not have a nursery provision.

## 6.5 Multi-function use of the building

Moray primary schools are not formally let for community groups and activities. No informal arrangements are currently in place.

## 6.6 Capacity in nearest schools

### Keith Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 232/ Functional Capacity: 462 = 70%

### St. Thomas RC Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 63/ Functional Capacity: 75= 84%

### Newmill Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 72/ Functional Capacity: 98 = 73%

## **Conclusions**

On the basis of the evaluations of criteria 1-6, Botriphnie Primary School is currently not a sustainable school. Whilst the roll and enrolment forecasts indicate that the school will remain static over the next 7 years, allowing the school to remain as two classes, the roll is very close to dropping to a one class provision.

## **Recommendations**

As the roll is very close to dropping to a one class provision, and should movement take place to result in this, the provision will incur further high costs to the Council in future years to retain this school. The potential inability to fill staffing vacancies when they arise is a concern.

The following options could be considered:

- Consider campus leadership model
- Consider merger with Keith or Newmill Primary Schools and rezoning to ensure the shortest travel times for children.

## **Strengths**

- The commitment of the Headteacher to identify and progress with areas for school improvement and to inspire and lead staff, pupils and parents to progress together.
- Children who enjoy being a part of Botriphnie Primary School, feeling safe, supported and with a very strong sense of belonging to their school and its wider community.
- Whole staff team who build a positive ethos and environment for learning and work conscientiously to build and maintain a positive and rights respecting culture across the school community as they aim to meet the needs of all individual learners.
- Wider partnership working and community links extending children's experiences beyond the classroom in Outdoor Learning and through a range of groups and activities.

## **Areas for Improvement**

- Review the layout and organisation of learning spaces as the school develops its plan to provide 'Continuous Provision' and Independent Learning alongside structured adult led learning and so ensuring high standards and consistency across all approaches as well as creating the best environment for learning.

- Collaboratively review approaches for planning learning, teaching and assessment whilst implementing appropriate curriculum progressions at an appropriate pace.
- Continue to develop consistency in the quality of learning and teaching across the school within the new staff team, revising “assessment is for learning” approaches and supported by Education Scotland’s ‘Moderation Cycle’ and linked resources. Place a focus on pace, challenge and differentiation for progression in learning

# **CROSSROADS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **1. Quality Educational Experience**

### **1.1 Attainment**

Overall attainment in the school is good with the majority of pupils achieving what is expected of them in terms of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels. Attainment data for the school is collected through the Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) in June each year. The numbers in each cohort are small so large percentage changes can represent only one or two children. The use of data from the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) is available to support teacher professional judgement and further training in this area will benefit future identification of gaps and interventions for children.

The children in P1 and P4 in Crossroads in session 2017/18 achieved above the Moray average for Achievement of a Level in Literacy and Numeracy. For the P7 pupils, it was in line with Moray averages given the small numbers of pupils in the class.

The school uses the Moray Tracker to monitor pupil progress and attainment with termly attainment meetings between the Headteacher and staff. There is a need to upskill staff to develop their ability to identify gaps in learning and then plan interventions to focus on meeting learners' needs more accurately. This would help to improve learning and teaching and consequently raise attainment. This would also supplement the variety of summative and formative assessment approaches. Attainment over time is variable and generally improving and the size of the school means that more personalised approaches to planning should enable children to achieve more.

### **1.2 Wider school activities**

Taking account of Pupil Voice there is the appetite for more school activities outside class time to compliment Active Schools who run sports sessions on a termly basis after school which are well received by pupils and benefit the majority of children in activities such as basketball. Wider school activities are being reviewed at present with Pupil Voice groups and should lead to more opportunities for learners to develop skills for life and learning.

Pupil achievements are celebrated through a variety of means such as assemblies, wall displays and Learning Logs which are greatly valued by parents as a means of communicating their children's achievements. Parents spoke highly of these in terms of home-school communication. More outdoor learning would enable pupils to better understand the local context of their school and enable them to experience a variety of contexts for learning.

Pupils have the opportunity to be involved in charity fund-raising events such as Children in Need and school fund-raising which help them to learn the importance of working to support those who are less fortunate than

themselves as well as providing them with responsibility by undertaking leadership roles.

### 1.3 ASN provision

There is 33% of the school roll with ASN and there is a need for upskilling of the staff by the SfL teacher in terms of a differentiated curriculum which is well planned and assessed.

Learner Profiles and Strategies (LPS) profiles are completed using the Moray standard profile for all pupils with ASN and these are shared with parents and staff. The LPS profiles require ongoing update and should be incorporated into a planned ASN Calendar. IEPs are written by the class teacher and are used to facilitate meetings with parents. There is the potential for the class teacher to be more involved in the writing of these IEPs.

The Support for Learning teacher has hours on Monday mornings and works with pupils within the classroom and on specific skills. Support Assistants work on interventions although there is a need for these to be better planned to meet pupils' needs.

Enhanced transition to high school is personalised where necessary and begins in P6 for some children, with three days in P7 for all pupils transitioning with identified additional support. The buildings and grounds are fully accessible for wheelchairs users although there are no pupils with this need at present. There is no designated disabled toilet and wheelchair users would not be able to use emergency exits from the classroom and could only use the main school entrance. The outdoor learning area at the back of the school building cannot be accessed by wheelchair users due to access issues.

The classroom environments are conducive to learning for pupils with sensory and physical needs. The school is inclusive, caring and supportive of pupils and their families which is appreciated by the school community.

### 1.4 Curriculum

The children are all taught in a single P1-7 multi-composite class which is good for social interaction across the stages. The children are taught in a variety of ways which included groups from across the stages as in Social Studies or in more ability related groups as in Numeracy. Due to the nature of the class pupils are generally grouped by their level of ability and not their age which helps to facilitate the inclusion of pupils with a range of needs and abilities.

The current Vision, Values and Aims are under review with all stakeholders in the process so that there is clarity. There is a need for the school to develop a clear Curriculum Rationale in line with the updated Vision and Values. Integrated into this will be skills progression within the context of the Moray Skills Framework which should be set within appropriate curriculum progressions and learner pathways.

There is scope to consider using the local area in developing rich learning contexts to provide children with real-life experiences as well as understanding the local heritage and landscape. Outside areas could be developed in a range of ways and the school is planning to look at this within the next year so that outdoor learning and play become an integrated aspect of the curriculum. The school is in a rural farming community and there is scope to ensure that experiences take account of the context of the school so that pupils who will have a future involvement in farming can begin to be prepared for this lifestyle as well as preparing pupils for other careers.

Joint strategic planning and appropriately resourced CPD opportunities with the other schools within the Keith ASG have been undertaken which should lead to improved learning and teaching so raising attainment. The Quad Schools concept has now been extended across the whole ASG with increased collaboration and sharing of good practice. Crossroads' 1+2 focus on French is engaging for pupils and this leads to the children being well prepared for the next stage of their linguistic learning journey at secondary school.

Health and Wellbeing is an important aspect of the life of the school and ways of working include the Whole School Quality Circle Time Model with a restorative approach to dealing with any issues which arise. As a result almost all children are ready for learning and are supported in a range of ways to access the curriculum. An Achievement Wall is used along with Reflection Logs to encourage children to take ownership of their learning and have a focus on improvement. Differentiation in terms of appropriately differentiated Numeracy and Literacy activities could be better planned and supported by more learning focused homework.

## 1.5 Learning & Teaching

The children engaged positively with the review team and were able to talk about their learning experiences clearly when asked. There was evidence of clearly structured lessons and clear expectations of what is expected of pupils in terms of behaviour within classes. All areas of the school were well maintained, well-resourced and provided a range of opportunities to support and aid learning.

There was a positive ethos across the school and very good relationships were evident between children and staff which created a positive learning environment. Children were quite clear about the purpose of their learning and they understood if they had been successful and what steps they would have to take to make progress.

In lessons observed the pace of learning could be faster and there was the opportunity to include more challenge such as having more able pupils working with pupils in the stage above. Differentiation was evident although it could be better planned for. This planning could involve assessment strategies to ensure that pupil progress is recognised and that skills

development is incorporated into pupil learning experiences in terms of success criteria. Learning intentions and success criteria were evident in classes although there was too much dead-time and a reliance on soft-ware to lead and not aid learning.

In the P1 to P3 stage there is the opportunity for more learning through play which could be facilitated through work/play stations within the classroom and using the outdoors. Also, active starts at this stage could better prepare children for the main learning of the day. There was no evidence of pupil led planning and this should be a focus for improvement.

The children do benefit from a range of learning approaches and the support staff lead learning in the classroom. Pupil feedback was given effectively and is supported through reflection logs which the children complete, some with adult support, and form a vehicle for good communication with home.

#### 1.6 School buildings

Condition: standard C (2017)

Suitability: standard B (2017)

Crossroads Primary School is a well-kept and well maintained school within a confined space at The Grange Crossroads which is in a prefabricated building with a separate kitchen, dining hall and school hall which is used for performances and indoor PE in inclement weather. The school has a playground and sheds for storing play-time equipment.

There is currently 1 class formed for the 19 pupils at Crossroads.

#### 1.7 Pastoral Care

There was a positive and welcoming ethos in the school. Children are well nurtured and felt supported by all school staff and knew who to go to if they required some kind of support. This was exemplified by Bob the Worry Monster and the support given by the Home School Link Worker. A positive culture of support and pastoral care was evident across the school and the children felt that they were part of a supportive learning community. Any issues such as friends falling out were dealt with sensitively and appropriately by staff and the pupils found staff to be approachable and friendly. Pupils were positive regarding most aspects of the school and hold their school and its staff in high regard. The school community has a strong sense of equity and equality for all pupils and this should be more evident in the forthcoming newly reviewed school vision and values. Staff demonstrated a caring and positive attitude towards pupils where their efforts both pastorally and academically were welcomed and valued by pupils and their families. The school has started on the Rights Respecting School Award programme and is working on achieving the Bronze Award.

The school has “Golden Rules” which complement the successful school ethos, and this enhances the positive relationships which exist within the schools and support the VVA which will be soon renewed.

Pupils feel that nearly all children behave well and are very accepting of one another, there are very few instances of bullying and the children support one another in their learning and during break and lunchtime.

## 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

Attendance rate: 95.36% (Moray Primary School average: 94.9%)

Violence/Aggression against staff: no incidents were recorded (2017/2018).

There were no incidents of exclusion (2017/18).

There are no real issues with pupil behaviour at Crossroads. The values outlined in or 'Getting it Right for Every Child', ensures the children and young people are safe, healthy, achieving their potential, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. A values based positive behaviour and relationships approach encourages good behaviour which is far more important than sanction. When sanctions are appropriate, these are agreed between both parties during restorative conversations.

## 2. School roll

### 2.1 Roll and roll forecast

The School Roll in 2018 (Pupil Census) is 19 pupils. Since 2013 the roll has decreased by 10 pupils (from 29 pupils).

Forecasted roll: 2025 – 24

Estimated increasing roll over next 7 years

### 2.2 Inward placing requests

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 0, 2015/16: 0, 2016/17: 0, 2017/18: 1, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 0 inward placing requests

### 2.3 Outward placing requests

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 0, 2015/16: 1, 2016/17: 0, 2017/18: 3, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 1 outward placing request

### 2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 19; Functional Capacity: 50 = 38%

2018 School Roll: 19; Maximum Capacity: 66 = 29%

### 2.5 Class composition

2019-20: 1 class

### 2.6 Number of teachers

2018 – 1 full time equivalent teacher.

The full staffing complement includes 1.0 FTE Headteacher, who is a Paired Headteacher with Rothiemay Primary School, usually the 1.0 FTE Principal

Teacher is the main class teacher. A 0.08 FTE SfL teacher covers the Principal teacher's McCrone time for half a day.

There are also two Classroom assistants and Children's Supervisors who support in the school in a variety of roles within and out-with the classroom.

## 2.7 School roll

2018 School Roll: 22; Current 2019 School roll: 19

## 3. **Financial position**

### 3.1 Budgeted running cost

The cost per pupil in 2018/2019 (based on current roll: 19) is £7,748.

### 3.2 Financial trends

School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 3.75% underspend restricted to scheme rules of 2.5% = £4,275.

### 3.3 Financial plans

The Headteacher uses devolved budget effectively for whole school developments, linked in with school self-evaluation and School Improvement Plan Priorities.

## 4. **Staff Wellbeing and Development**

### 4.1 Availability of Teachers

There is no issue with staffing the school at the present time.

### 4.2 Headteacher Relief Time

The Headteacher is the sole member of Senior Leadership at Crossroads Primary School. As such, the Headteacher recognises the substantive Principal Teacher as her Extended Leadership Team for support and challenge, as well as leadership when she is in the paired school.

### 4.3 Leadership Capacity

The Headteacher came into post in February of last year and is providing clear direction to the school, managing the pace of change focused around the key school improvement priorities which are based on an Education Scotland report published in February 2018. Staff and pupils are increasingly encouraged to lead on a range of priorities and initiatives for school improvement which should increase the pace of change. This is complemented by involvement in self-evaluation activities and professional activities at the school and ASG level. School improvements are monitored carefully and this supports the Standards and Quality reporting with the involvement with other members of staff.

### 4.4 Staff Development and Leadership of Improvement of Change

Staff are given a greater level of leadership and autonomy which they are beginning to become more comfortable with and increasingly able to carry out successfully. Staff work effectively as a team to positively support pupils and this is recognised by pupils and parents.

## **5. Schools Accessibility**

### **5.1 Home to school transport time**

The majority of pupils (13; 68%) are from within catchment around Crossroads. 6 children (32%) originate from outwith catchment. For most children in this latter category it is anticipated travel is less than 30 minutes.

### **5.2 Distance to another suitable school**

Nearest schools to Crossroads Primary School are identified as Keith Primary School (4.2 miles; 7 minutes approximate travel via B9018 and A95), Newmill Primary School (4.2 miles; 8 minutes approximate travel via B9018) and Rothiemay Primary School (7.8 miles, 12 minutes approximate travel time via A95 and B9117).

### **5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/training organisations**

Crossroads has a paired headship with Rothiemay and a range of collegiate activities take place between the 2 schools and there is also co-operative working arrangements with the other Quad Schools within the ASG. Transition arrangements for P7-S1 and enhanced transitions for ASN pupils are in place with Keith Grammar School (4.2 miles; 7 minutes approximate travel).

## **6. Strong Links with the Community**

### **6.1 Parents' Views**

Parents in the focus group had long histories with the school including two former pupils and they thought that their experiences of working with the school were very good. They were very supportive of the head teacher and parents collectively feel that all the needs of their children are being met at Crossroads. They had chosen to send their children to Crossroads despite larger schools being nearby.

Parents are appreciative of the staff efforts to give their children as many opportunities as possible given the school's size and they were grateful for the way in which the school staff had positively managed the loss of a teacher through transfer due to a decrease in numbers in November last.

Parents regarded the school as a "family" and liked the way in which their children were well known by the members of staff. The care given to their

children was believed to be very good and the parents thought that the staff went beyond what was expected of them which gave them re-assurance on the quality of their children's education. Parents were anxious that any further drop in pupil numbers could have an adverse effect upon the future of the school.

## 6.2 Degree and Quality of Parental Involvement

The Parent Council has a core of parents who regularly work to support school improvement and the identified priorities within the plan to ensure that the provision of the school is appropriate and sufficient. Parents are knowledgeable about the school and spoke enthusiastically about the engagement of the staff with them. They were appreciated the quality of the education which their children receive, although homework was a challenge for some parents.

Parents of pupils with ASN appreciate the additional support their children receive although they did express concern about the time their children spend with the Support Assistants and not in direct contact with the class teacher. Communication is considered appropriate and keeps them informed about their children's performance and progress. The Head teacher and other staff communicate regularly by email, and they are accessible to respond to any queries which may arise.

## 6.3 Contribution of the school to the Community

The links with the local area of Grange are largely fostered during the school day because of the dispersed nature of the school catchment. The school works closely with members of the local community and beyond where possible. The school has visitors such as the local Community Warden, the Police Liaison Officer and representative from charities like the SSPCA. The minister of St. Rufus, Botriphnie and Grange Church of Scotland is the School Chaplain and visits the school on a regular basis although the charge is vacant at present.

Links with Rothiemay Primary School for pupils exist but could be more fully developed given that the Headteacher is paired across the two schools. This allows for staff joint working on in-service and training sessions, and for peer collaboration formally and informally.

Crossroads pupils usually transition to Keith Grammar School. There is a robust programme of pastoral support in place, and an enhanced transition tailored to pupils' personal needs to ensure that making that move to secondary education is smooth. This also means that in the later primary years, the children are cementing relationships with other pupils transitioning from other areas of the Keith ASG. These relationships are enhanced by an annual residential trip for P7 pupils to Abernethy for the small schools from the ASG.

## 6.4 Other Provision (e.g. Nursery)

The school does not have a nursery onsite; children will come from a range of other early years settings.

#### 6.5 Multi-function use of building

In Moray, Primary Schools are not currently let for community groups and activities. No informal arrangements for school building use are currently in place.

#### 6.6 Capacity in nearest schools

##### Keith Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll - 232 / Functional Capacity 462 = 70%

##### Newmill Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll - 72 / Functional Capacity 98 = 73%

##### Rothiemay Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll - 61 / Functional Capacity 75 = 81%

### **Conclusion**

On the basis of the evaluations of criteria 1-6, Crossroads Primary School is currently not a sustainable school. The roll and enrolment forecasts indicate that the school roll will be variable over the next 7 years, remaining as one P1-7 class for most of this time.

### **Recommendations**

School roll projections and the contents of this report suggest insufficient capacity and high costs to the Council in future years to retain this school. The potential inability to fill staffing vacancies when they rise is a concern.

The following options could be considered:

- Consider campus leadership model
- Consider merger with Keith, Newmill or Rothiemay Primary Schools and rezoning to ensure the shortest travel times for children.

### **Strengths**

- The positive and supportive leadership of the Headteacher which has brought stability to the life of the school.
- A school ethos which makes it a welcoming community and helps learners to feel safe and secure in their educational journey.

- Positive relationships between all members of the school community which has created a firm foundation for more effective learning and teaching.
- Pupils who are well-mannered, polite and keen to learn meaning that they are mostly ready to be taken further in their learning.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Review approaches to learning and teaching in order that children take more responsibility in their learning and develop skills in understanding the language of learning.
- Further develop leadership at all levels within the school.
- Improve the planning, assessment and moderation of learning to provide a greater degree of pace and challenge for all learners.
- Make more effective use of the range of pupil data available to ensure that learning is appropriately challenging and interventions are planned to close gaps in learning.
- Continue to develop pathways in all curricular areas.

# **KEITH PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **1. Quality Educational Experience**

### **1.1 Attainment**

In P1, achievement of a level (ACEL) data for 2017/2018 indicates that pupils perform above Moray averages for Reading, Listening and Talking, and Numeracy, and below Moray average for Writing. In P4, achievement of a level data for 2017/2018 highlights that pupils perform above Moray average for Reading, Writing and Listening and Talking, and below Moray average for Numeracy. In P7, achievement of a level data for 2017/2018 indicates that children performed above Moray averages for Writing and Numeracy. Children achieved marginally below Moray averages for Reading and Listening and Talking. School data and Teacher Professional Judgments (TPJ) are further informed by Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) at P1, P4 and P7 stages.

In discussion with the Headteacher and Depute Headteachers, a number of interventions are in place in order to strengthen learning experiences and raise attainment. Keith Primary School participates in Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy, addressing gaps in pre-writing and early literacy skills. Keith Primary School also support Emerging Literacy across the local authority further with early stage practitioners leading one of three local authority Lead Practitioner networks of practice. PEF funding is further used to provide targeted literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing support to individuals and groups of pupils through additional classroom assistant support. Resource packs and activities have been developed in order to support literacy and home learning with further workshops to following on from successful family learning session led by the Family Support Worker, supporting raised aspirations of all.

In their focus on raising attainment, the school focuses on three core areas: Learning and Teaching, Pupil Support and Assessment and Moderation. The school has worked on consistency in learning and teaching and lesson structure, with refreshed numeracy progression and use of PEF identified resources including Rapid Reading, Rapid Maths and Rapid Phonics in support of groups and individuals. The school will collegiately review approaches to Writing in the coming session, as reflected in P1 and P7 ACEL data. The school has worked closely with its Associated Schools Group (ASG) schools and Keith Grammar School in Modern Languages 1+2 and German progression where the school is well placed with L3 (3<sup>rd</sup> Language) development with strong commitment and focus on Scottish Heritage and Burns literature.

Through discussion with the Headteacher and staff, practitioners continue to grow in confidence in their TPJ of learner level achievement as per the Scottish Government's data return requirement for key stages (P1, P4, P7). This includes work within the school and with practitioners across the Keith ASG, focusing in on Education Scotland's Moderation Cycle. A variety of

assessment approaches are used across all curriculum areas with engagement with National Benchmarks at initial stages. Learners make progress from prior levels of attainment in Literacy and Numeracy and teaching staff - working together with SfL staff and the Principal Teacher (Additional Support Needs) – identify individuals and groups in need of support and intervention. Staff meeting time is further used for collegiate review of planning and moderation activities.

The school has embraced Tracking and Monitoring of learner attainment and achievement, supported by a comprehensive school developed database linking in teacher's planning ("Dashboard"), pupil records, Health and Wellbeing related information and attainment tracking. Staff do not yet have full understanding of data and analysis at all levels, but are very aware of children and their individual support needs. Further tracking of cohorts and individual pupils over time, using all available data (for example, Scottish National Standardised Assessment [SNSA], PiPs, InCAS, Achievement of a level, TPJ, diagnostic assessments) and upskilling practitioners at all levels in respect of data analysis will support them further in assessing pupil needs. It is acknowledged that performance data is used when checking on pupil prior levels of attainment and gaps are identified in learning through SNSA diagnostic reports. Further data analysis would support awareness of the impact of interventions for closing attainment gaps.

## 1.2 Wider school activities

A range of clubs are organised for lunchtimes by the Active Schools Coordinator. Badminton is arranged for pupils, with Running planned later in the year. The Gardening Club, supported by the janitor, support assistants, parents and community volunteers, has recently acquired a greenhouse and are looking forward to growing their plants from seeds. This links to the sustainability agenda and other CfE learning, as well as crucial life skills around growing and harvesting healthy foods.

Fundraising is central to the work of the "Frog Squad" (Parent Council having taken this name from the school logo) and they involve pupils in events throughout the year. Recently the playgrounds have been improved, with the children themselves running the fundraising events. In addition to fundraising there is a good base of support in the community, such as Walker's providing mince pies and shortbread for the Festive Fayre. Children make regular visits to Taylor Court and the Glen Isla Retirement Home, and a Coffee Morning there combined fund raising with their inter-generational learning. Staff from Glen Isla have spoken to the children about dementia and helped the pupils to develop an awareness of the needs and strategies for managing old age.

Celebrations of wider achievement successes are made regularly in assemblies and in the monthly newsletter which is distributed in paper and electronically via the website. Social media is used to further promote the successes of learners. The Heather Stanning termly award of a trophy and medal recognises special achievements such as resilience and initiative. Assemblies showcase learning and parents and the wider community are

invited to the class assemblies. Parents speak of them as inclusive and building confidence, with all children taking an active part in these.

Many visitors to the school add expertise and enhance the curriculum. Police Scotland delivered the internet safety work, Scottish Opera run an annual workshop day and performance and the ministers from various Keith churches come into school to support RME, collective worship and the ethos of the school. In "The Beeches" (ASN base) a regular favourite is Mr Watson, music therapist, with his range of percussion instruments for pupils to join in singing and playing together. There are visits from theatre companies and specialists like the Bug Man, with his snakes and spiders. Annual events for P7 help their transition to Keith Grammar School and team cooperation. Events supported by the Associated School Group - and funding from the Frog Squad such as the team building with Outfit Moray - are eagerly anticipated and enjoyed by pupils.

Activities for children to engage in local, regional and national initiatives are built into the curriculum. For instance, the curricular language L3 is Scots and the children take part in the Burns Federation poetry competition. Language learning is supplemented by the "Keep Doric Alive" section of the monthly newsletter that offers key phrases in Doric and encourages spoken native tongues in school. The main foreign language of the school is German and this year a native German speaker has supported the language which is learned in all classes, including the nursery. Practitioners are further supported by the Modern Languages Department at Keith Grammar School.

Various groups operate with the aim of engaging Student Voice, some including nursery and the youngest pupils where appropriate. The Eco-group, known as "Power Rangers" are working towards the Silver award and promote competitions such as the poster campaign to save electricity. The P7 Prefects, technicians and House Captains meet regularly to feed into school improvement work and promote their priorities. There is scope for developing this further and for encouraging greater pupil leadership throughout the school. Pupils in the focus groups spoke predominantly about tasks they undertook, such as sorting out house points and certificates, and being an extra pair of hands in the playground.

### 1.3 ASN provision

146 pupils or 45% of the school roll are recorded as having an Additional Support Need. This is higher than the Moray average (33% - 2017/2018).

Pupil needs are met both in the classroom and in the enhanced provision, the latter operating an "open door" policy. Time spent in each location is based on individual pupil needs and agreed in collaboration with class teachers and PT ASN as part of the child planning process. The enhanced provision is situated at the centre of the school, is integral to school life and is described as the "heart of the school." There is expertise in meeting a wide range of pupil needs including severe and profound, physical, communication and learning needs. An inclusive ethos is embraced by staff and pupils who are also encouraged to include and involve everyone in school life.

Partnerships with a wide range of professionals are evident in review of the robust documentation used to plan and evidence support for pupils. Professional working relationships are established between the school and a range of wider support services including Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Moray SEBN service, Moray Sensory Support team and Moray Autism Service. There are also strong relationships within the local community. Extended transition links with Keith Grammar and community facilities and links with the Home-School link worker are strong. Collaborative working within the Keith ASG Additional Support for Learning team is valued, with quarterly meetings attended by ASN staff and Headteachers from ASG Primary Schools.

Established procedures for identification, planning to meet needs and record progress are strong. There is thorough documentation such as Personal Learning Planning, Individual tracking and recording, Learner Profiles and Strategies, use of IEPs and Child's Planning documents using solutions-orientated meetings. The school also has their own pupil database which tracks and records pupil progress and stores pupil documentation. Information is also recorded on SEEMIS, with potential noted for human error leading to duplication or omission and important information not being transferred when the child moves to another school. Baseline and standardised assessments, tracking data and other literacy assessments are used to inform and identify target groups. The school are developing new materials for the range of classroom based strategies used for literacy intervention and reduce the frequency of small group teaching.

Application of the data to inform meeting of pupil needs in the classroom is inconsistent at this time and relies greatly on ASN staff to support. This is also true of the application of differentiation and individualised planning: either not evident or reliant on resources from the ASN department. Teachers have access to the Learner Profiles and Strategies which have recently been introduced and is recognised by the school as a useful tool in supporting practice.

A number of pupils with severe and complex needs are educated mainly within the enhanced provision. Wherever possible, opportunities are created for pupils to be included in learning experiences alongside their peers. For example, school assemblies, playground space, whole school activities and themes. IEP targets are in place and displayed as a visual for the pupils and are reviewed regularly. They are visible and monitored by all staff working with the child using learning tracks. Programmes are highly individualised, tracked and monitored. There is considerable expertise and experience amongst staff working with these pupils in regard to physical care, medical needs and aspects of the curriculum such of the use of TACPAC (Touch And Communication Pack – sensory communication resource). Teaching and learning for these pupils is planned and led almost exclusively by the PT ASN supported by a team of dedicated, well managed and experienced support staff. The Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) have a strong understanding of pupil needs and work collaboratively to respond to these needs in an efficient

and sensitive manner. Daily two-way communication with parents and staff on pupil wellbeing and learning is undertaken either on arrival/departure from school or via communication books which are also updated by PSAs.

The school environment is fit for purpose with extensive facilities to meet a range of Additional Support Needs. More space has been created within the school to accommodate the wide range of personal care and medical needs that are currently being met. Review of the responsibilities of the PT ASfL is now advocated with 45% of the school roll recorded with an Additional Support Need. Class teachers require support in order to take greater ownership of the assessment and delivery of appropriate learning for all pupils, including those pupils with ASN.

#### 1.4 Curriculum

The school's Vision and Values have been developed collaboratively involving all members of the school community. The school's statement of values emanates from "KEITH" with core values of Kindness, Everyone showing respect, Improvement, Teamwork and Happiness. Pupils have awareness of these values and they are communicated through assemblies and in the classroom by means of positive relationship messages. The school has a Curriculum Structure in place which is based on the eight Curricular Areas. The curriculum is delivered in part through topics and IDL themes which seek to capture pupil interest. Recent topics have included The Romans, Pirates, Egyptians, the Katie Morag books, The Jacobites and Fairy Tales. The curriculum could be enhanced further by linking more to the unique context of the school and the opportunities for Outdoor Learning. Pupil Voice could be extended more in terms of designing a Curriculum Rationale which is based on a unified school vision, values and aims with whole school community consultation and review.

The school has an awareness of the importance of delivering knowledge and skills through the curriculum. This is enhanced by a positive behaviour management policy based on traditional values such as honesty and hard work which the school community follows. There is opportunity for the skills for learning, life and work integral to Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) to be more fully related to the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) programme so that there is more direct relevance between skills learned in the classroom and the World of Work. Recent STEM activities have proved popular with pupils in the upper stages and this should help staff to focus on enquiry skills in Science to enhance its delivery through Inter-disciplinary Learning (IDL). In the Early Years there is a focus on Literacy through the Emerging Literacy programme in which the school has been involved for three years. The school is also focusing on Numeracy, and all the developments in Literacy and Numeracy are included in the school's PEF planning to 'close the gap' which is related to poverty and aspirational deficit.

There are a wide range of curricular opportunities on offer which are regularly reviewed and progressions are being created for German in collaboration with the Modern Languages Department at Keith Grammar School and within the

school on Scots language to ensure consistency of language delivery across the stages. Progressions are being developed for ICT from Nursery to P7 so that pupils develop skills as part of a planned programme of learning. Linked to this is the need for curricular progressions across all curricular areas. Health and well-being is a current SIP priority.

The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of other activities such as Eco Group who are working with the school community to lessen its carbon footprint. Scottish Opera run workshops for pupils and visiting theatre companies such as The Takeaway Theatre Company, exposing the school community to high quality performing arts experiences. Scots Poetry plays an important part in the life of the school both in classes and as part of poetry competitions which include the Scottish Poetry and Burns Federation Competitions. At year group level opportunities exist for pupils to take part in STEM activities which include the Primary Engineers Workshop for P7, encouraging pupils to consider engineering careers. These activities are enhanced by members of the local community coming into school to participate in assemblies especially local church ministers.

Current work on progressions will help teachers to liaise between stages to ensure progression and to ensure appropriate curriculum coverage. The PEF budget is used for targeted interventions in order to improve attainment and achievement in Literacy and Numeracy where gaps are identified to be related to poverty. This is being actioned by the appointment of extra staff which include a Family Support Worker and Classroom Assistant to support children within and out-with school. In the Nursery all pupils engage with a curriculum which is based on play and outdoor learning. There is a well-resourced outdoor play area adjacent to the Nursery which is utilised to give children a variety of experiences to develop social and sensory skills. Consequently pupils are encouraged to be active in the outdoors. The Nursery also accesses the local wooded area as well as the outside provision. There is a well-planned curricular transition which ensures that the pupils' learning is smoothly managed from Nursery to P1.

## 1.5 Learning & Teaching

Keith Primary School is a very bright, modern and welcoming environment for learning. Across classes and corridors, display spaces are used well to showcase pupil work, learning and leadership opportunities and celebrate pupil achievements. During the reviewing team's time at Keith Primary School, all classes were visited on at least two occasions in order to observe learning and teaching activities, speak with learners and review classwork.

In most lessons visited, children understood the purpose of their learning with clarity on *what* they were learning. Clear instructions were provided in most lessons with evidence of planning for groups and individual pupils apparent across most classes. When questioned regarding *why* they were learning different topics, concepts or aspects of learning, the majority of learners spoken with were less clear regarding the purpose of learning. Learners engaged in planned "Active Start" class-based activities at the start of the

school day. As a teacher wellbeing check-in as well as a vehicle for development of core literacy and numeracy skills through activity based approaches, notable time is committed to this universal support. In the majority of classes visited, it is noted that this approach now requires review for relevance to all cohort groups against the time commitment involved.

Learning Intentions were shared in most classes visited, with mix between knowledge and skills-based learning intentions. Success Criteria (whole class) were identifiable in most classes, with variability in Success Criteria focus from those linked closely with learning intentions to those involving more structural features. Co-creation of Success Criteria was further observed in less than half of lessons. Further differentiation of Success Criteria would have supported individuals and groups more in the majority of classes, supporting learners to take greater ownership of their learning and support 'chunking' of learning into achievable yet challenging proportions. Extending opportunities for self and peer assessment linked to Success Criteria would also support increased pupil ownership of learning, reflection on progress and next steps in learning in most lessons visited.

In almost all lessons, children engaged in learning activities well with positive relationships and behaviour exhibited by almost all children. Staff know learners well overall and support them in a rights-respecting and positive manner. As a result, most children engage positively with staff across the school. Practitioners across the school are supported well by the Principal Teacher (ASN) with regards to differentiation of teaching materials and activities for those children with ASN. Planned and developed by classroom practitioners, further differentiation of activities and Success Criteria as stated previously would support and where appropriate, challenge learners further in their learning. This includes approaches to questioning, with open-ended questioning observed in few lessons visited. Such questioning may have supported deeper learning and further promotion of higher order thinking as observed in some of the lessons visited.

In the majority of lessons observed, pace of learning was slow for less than half of learners spoken with, where additional challenge would have deepened their learning. Increased focus on skills, career education standards and transfer of skills in wider IDL contexts would further increase depth and transferability of learning, supporting future progression. Digital learning and development of learner digital literacy was observed, including within discrete ICT learning activity, with variability observed in learner skills development.

In the majority of classes, learners received written or verbal feedback on learning activities, tasks and following answering whole-class questions. Extending opportunities for formative assessment within learning experiences across stages would lead to further timely interventions, ensuring sufficient pace and challenge for learners across stages. Most teachers used whole class and individual praise well in order to motivate learners who in turn responded positively. In a few classes, learners reflected on learning activities through ongoing dialogue and learning conversations with class teachers. This practice was inconsistent across the school. Increased rigour

in learner self-reflection against Success Criteria and mapping through consistent use of learning logs across the school would further strengthen identification of strengths, progress and next steps in learning. Supported by development of a shared and universal language of learning, learner progress and attainment may strengthen along with providing a consistent approach for supporting reporting to parents.

#### 1.6 School buildings

Condition: standard A (2017)

Suitability: standard A (2017)

Keith Primary School is a modern primary school, the present building opening in February 2012 and sharing a campus with Keith Grammar School and Keith Sports and Community Centre. Keith Primary School is the largest primary school in the Keith Area with 14 classrooms, Art and Science Room, Music and Drama Room, Additional Support Needs Base and Nursery.

School facilities are wheelchair friendly and encompass a paved plaza at the main entrance to the school with sufficient parking. An extensive playground area inclusive of an all-weather multi-use games area and an Astroturf pitch shared with local schools. An outdoor amphitheatre is further provided in support of delivery of the curriculum. The Nursery has a well-resourced outdoor play area, supporting free-flow play and outdoor learning. The school has a purpose built and fully equipped ASN facility which includes a multi-sensory room, soft-play room and life-skills room as well as classrooms, a laundry and disabled shower facility.

#### 1.7 Pastoral Care

Keith Primary School as a community are committed to *Getting It Right For Every Child* and have a common and shared understanding across the school of the importance of children's wellbeing and inclusion. Class teachers take an active pastoral role for children in their classes and make time for individual pupils in their classes, taking note of any changes in behaviours and demeanour to ensure they receive the support they may need. Groups of children are targeted for support with self-esteem and wider social skills, with access to The Beeches at break and lunch times for those children who may need it over and above ASN support. Keith Primary School has a dedicated Support for Learning team with very supportive teachers, pupil support and classroom assistants led by an experienced Principal Teacher of Support for Learning, targeting support as appropriate and working in partnership with wider agencies.

Children are treated consistently and fairly using the Golden Rules developed in partnership with children and used as the basis for the school rewards system. Staff are further proactive in ensuring children are listened to and cared for, safe in school and their wider lives. This includes support in wider issues including Internet Safety awareness, CPR training, Police Scotland talks on 'drugs' and BSL (British Sign Language) group for interested learners. Staff are keen to recognise children's strengths and needs and offer personal

support to those children who may require it. Children have a range of adults they may wish to speak with including teachers, playground staff, pupil support assistants and home-school link worker. Children also have a range of pupil groups for wider participation including Prefects, Eco Group, Gardening Group, Playground Action Group and Circle Time discussions as appropriate. "PALS" or "Pupil Activity Leaders" also support play activities with children in P1-P2 with traditional games, encouraging participation of all. Children with exceptional needs are well supported and included.

Pupils are further supported well through pastoral transition activities including "Growing up" day in June where classes prepare for the next year group and their new teacher. Transition and extended transition activities for identified pupils are organised in preparation for move to secondary school. Likewise, Nursery-P1 transition is supported through joint events and topics with parental information evenings also organised for parents of new Nursery and new P1 children.

Children participating in focus group discussions believe most children in the school behave well and enjoy coming to school. Children know who to go to in order to access support and feel safe in school, highlighting the various systems in place in order to keep them safe including prefects and playground group. The school advocates promoting positive behaviour and aims to ensure everyone feels safe, are treated with dignity and respect. Children are aware of the wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI) for interventions as appropriate in support of their wider Health and Wellbeing. A next step as identified by the school would be engagement with the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award, supporting development of useful School, Classroom and Playground Charters for promotion and adoption by all of rights respecting behaviours and approaches.

## 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

Attendance rate: 94.33% (Moray Primary School average: 94.9%)

Violence/Aggression against staff: 22 incidents were recorded (2017/2018) involving 4 different pupils.

There were no incidents of exclusion (2017/18).

Keith Primary School's eight "Golden Rules" form the basis for their Positive Behaviour Management system. Developed by children in the school as the basis for their Rewards System – Frog Points and Certificates – the school mascot ("Keith the Frog") features regularly at assemblies and classroom visits. Children remind Keith of the Golden Rules, including the importance of not hurting others, honesty, working hard, listening to others, kindness and safety. Parents further speak of the very positive school ethos based on mutual respect, where behaviour is handled well by all staff. Children understand actions and consequences, with reduction in "Golden Time" resulting from poor behaviours exhibited over the week. Further review of

approaches to Positive Behaviour and development of a Positive Relationships policy or equivalent would further support this area.

## **2. School roll**

### **2.1 Roll and roll forecast**

The School Roll in 2017 (Pupil Census) is 323 pupils. Since 2013 the roll has decreased by 5 pupils (from 328 pupils).

Forecasted roll: 2025 – 324

Estimated increase by 1 pupil over next 6 years

### **2.2 Inward placing requests**

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 2, 2015/16: 2, 2016/17: 3, 2017/18: 4, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 3 inward placing requests

### **2.3 Outward placing requests**

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 10, 2015/16: 14, 2016/17: 14, 2017/18: 12, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 12 outward placing requests

All outwards placing requests across years relate to P1 entry stage

### **2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity**

2018 School Roll: 323; Functional Capacity: 462 = 70%

2018 School Roll: 323; Maximum Capacity: 482 = 67%

### **2.5 Class composition**

2018-19: 14 classes (including Nursery): 13 single stage and 1 composite (Classes: Composite: P5/6)

### **2.6 Number of teachers**

2018 – 17.6 FTE Teachers

Includes 1.0 FTE Headteacher, 1.0 FTE Depute Headteachers (2 Depute Headteachers; 0.6 FTE and 0.4 FTE respectively), and 1.0 FTE Principal Teacher (PT [ASN])

### **2.7 School roll**

2017 School Roll: 323; Current 2018 School roll: 327 (Nursery not included: 41 pupils)

## **3. Financial position**

### **3.1 Budgeted running cost**

The cost per pupil in 2018/2019 (based on roll: 323) is £2,765

### **3.2 Financial trends**

School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 1.55% underspend, below scheme rules of 2.5%.

### **3.3 Financial plans**

The Headteacher uses devolved budget effectively for whole school developments, reflective of School Improvement Plan Priorities. This has included purchase of Literacy, Numeracy and HWB resources and use of PEF funding for targeted resources and additional staffing as noted above.

#### **4. Staff Wellbeing and Development**

##### **4.1 Availability of Teachers**

Keith Primary School is fully staffed at this time, in respect of teaching staff. The school also have two Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) this session. Unplanned staff absences are covered where possible with absence at time of visit of the visiting Music teacher.

##### **4.2 Headteacher Relief Time**

Due to school size and staffing complement as detailed in section 2.6 above, the Headteacher is non-class committed. The Headteacher is further supported by 2 part-time Depute Headteachers, one taking distributed leadership responsibility as Nursery Manager.

##### **4.3 Leadership Capacity**

The Headteacher provides clear direction to the school, managing pace of change focused around the three key School Improvement priority areas detailed previously. Staff and pupils are empowered to lead on various areas for school improvement, involved in self-evaluation activities and setting priorities through pupil voice and staff meetings. Parents value home-school communication and support offered by all staff, including the offer of P1 shared learning, ASN parent support group and the approachability of staff. School improvements are monitored carefully and updated where necessary, as detailed in this session's addendum to the School Improvement Plan.

##### **4.4 Staff Development and Leadership of Improvement of Change**

A number of staff lead various pupil groups and leadership opportunities with further scope to lead on curriculum and learning and teaching related activities. Staff are involved in SIP priorities through staff meetings, reviewing progress and supporting identification of next steps. Staff are also encouraged to look outwards to Moray and National good practice and are involved in key agendas for change including raising attainment in Numeracy, 1+2 Languages (German, Scots Language) and Moderation as an ASG. Staff are encouraged to lead on CPD with early years practitioners also taking on "Lead Practitioner" role for Northern Alliance Emerging Literacy and one of Moray's three Lead Practitioner Networks.

Notable work has been undertaken to date on planning and progressions, with staff meeting time looking at consistency in planning and review of planning. Staff are keen to share resources and do so using the school planning "dashboard" linked to the school development management information system (database). Increased self-evaluation surrounding consistency in

quality of learning and teaching approaches across the school will support practitioners in improving outcomes further for all children. This includes staff development activities in relation to Staged Intervention and planning for differentiation for all learners. Consistency in approach to learner reflection on learning and next steps through learning logs or equivalent across the school, will further support learner ownership of learning and foster growth mindset.

The majority of pupils (294; 91%) are from within catchment in Keith. Few pupils (29; 9%) originate from outwith catchment.

## **5. Schools Accessibility**

### **5.1 Home to school transport time**

The majority of pupils (294; 91%) are from within catchment in Keith. Few pupils (29; 9%) originate from outwith catchment. Most children in this latter category it is anticipated, travel for less than 30 minutes. It is noted that Keith Primary School has the Enhanced Provision Base for the ASG, highlighting potential for longer travel times for identified pupils.

### **5.2 Distance to another suitable school**

Nearest schools to Keith Primary School are identified as St Thomas Primary School (0.9 miles; 5 minutes approximate travel via A96), Newmill Primary School (1.8 miles; 6 minutes approximate travel via B9116), Crossroads Primary School (4.2 miles; 8 minutes approximate travel via A95 and B9018) and Botriphnie Primary School (6.1 miles; 12 minutes approximate travel via B9014).

### **5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/training organisations**

Co-operative working arrangements as common with other Primary Schools exist among the ASG. Transition arrangements for P7-S1 and enhanced transitions for ASN pupils are in place with Keith Grammar School (shared campus).

## **6. Strong Links with the Community**

### **6.1 Parents' Views**

Parents through focus group discussions report that they are happy with Keith Primary School and the support that they and their children receive. Parents value the supportive wider school community along with the school's knowledge of children and encouragement given to children. Parents value teaching and support staff, and the "open door" nature of the school in the event of any questions or concerns.

Some parents recognise that learning logs are useful in mapping their child's learning and next steps and would welcome more regular sharing in order to support their child further. Nursery parents in particular enjoyed the "pancake and rhyme time" parental engagement event and positive interactions between adults and their children. This included use of floor-books to support children and their ability to discuss learning underway. Parents see the school as proactive in addressing concerns with an ethos built on mutual trust and respect. Recent homework focus group where all including children were welcome to give their views was well received. Term summaries are further well received, raising parental awareness regarding curriculum content and learning alongside invitation to attend regular assemblies and Open Evening events.

## 6.2 Degree and Quality of Parental Involvement

The school has an active Parent Council – the "Frog Squad" – named with reference to the school mascot as detailed previously. The group meet regularly throughout the year with attendance open to all parents, carers and members of the community. Recent events organised by the Frog Squad include a Family Quiz Night and the annual Tombola. Fundraising is used to pay for a range of wider pupil experiences including theatre group performances, a visit to Culloden battlefield and wider learning experiences.

The school and nursery also invite parents in to school to participate in wider focus groups in order to help evaluate the work of the school. This has included a review of homework.

## 6.3 Contribution of the school to the Community

The school play an active part in the local community, with inter-generational involvement with Glenisla Nursing Home and Taylor Court, involvement of pupils in the Keith Traditional Scots Music Festival, contribution to fundraising events and wider partnership working with ASG primary schools and Keith Grammar School. Fundraising this session raised over £400 for BBC Children in Need, with a very successful whole-school Christmas Fayre raising over £4,000 for school funds as well as developing wider skills in learners.

The school are active with regards to Scottish Poetry and Burns Federation Competitions with all children involved across the school in learning Scottish poems for an annual Scottish Poetry Competition, ultimately leading to 8 competitors taking part in the Burns Federation Competition. A number of pupils are also part of local Scouts, Guides, Brownies and Rainbows groups, taking part in local community events and representing their families and school.

## 6.4 Other Provision (e.g. Nursery)

The school has the ASG Enhanced Provision Base and a morning and afternoon nursery with 41 children currently attending the latter.

## 6.5 Multi-function use of building

The school has the ASG Enhanced Provision Base and also houses its own Nursery in an area adjoining the school nursery.

In Moray, Primary Schools are not currently let for community groups and activities. No informal arrangements for school building use are currently in place.

## 6.6 Capacity in nearest schools

Please refer to St Thomas Primary School, Newmill Primary School, Crossroads Primary School and Botriphnie Primary School SFF Reports, section 2.4.

## **Conclusions**

On the basis of the evaluations of criteria 1-6, Keith Primary School and Nursery (with ASG Enhanced Provision Base) is a sustainable school. The roll and enrolment forecasts indicate that the school will remain above the minimum roll threshold for a primary school (above 145 pupils per section 6.7, "Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools"), classed as a non-denominational school and supporting a Headteacher free from teaching commitment. Roll prediction indicates relative stability in school roll over the next six years. With current functional capacity (70%) and maximum capacity (67%) alongside relative future stability in school roll anticipated, Keith Primary School has future capacity to receive additional pupils from within or outwith existing catchment area.

## **Recommendations**

A non-denominational school, Keith Primary School covers the town of Keith. Projections suggest sufficient capacity in future years to meet the needs of the school catchment and further needs of the ASG with regards to Enhanced Provision Base placements from non-catchment area families or other schools. Below both Functional (70%) and Maximum capacities (67%), school size would allow for addition to current school roll (323 pupils).

The following options could be considered and appraised:

- Consider 3 – 18 campus leadership model
- Retain Keith Primary School as per existing arrangement

## **Strengths**

- Children who are very friendly and polite, exhibiting a rights respecting and positive attitude towards the school and their wider school community.

- Led by the Headteacher, a staff team committed to supporting and strengthening the wellbeing and support needs of all children with principles of GIRFEC (Getting It Right For Every Child) embedded in practice.
- A very positive and inclusive school ethos, underpinned by mutually positive relationships across the school community ensuring equity for all.
- A very calm and purposeful environment for learning, with staff planning a range of learning experiences across the curriculum.
- The breadth of knowledge and experience of a wide range of factors giving rise to Additional Support Needs, with appropriate strategies in place to meet learning needs in a coordinated and well-managed way.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Revisit school vision and values, ensuring continued relevance to school context and community.
- Reviewing the school's Curriculum Rationale and reflecting on the Curriculum for Excellence design principles, extend development of curriculum progressions to all curriculum areas in support of planning and progression for all.
- Revisit school learning and teaching strategy for development of a consistent and shared language of learning across the school, ensuring appropriate pace, challenge and differentiation for all learners led by classroom practitioners.
- Extend opportunities for pupil leadership across the school and in their learning.
- Review opportunities for staff leadership, empowering staff across the school to lead changes to curriculum, learning and teaching for raised attainment and achievement of all learners.

# **NEWMILL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **1. Quality Educational Experience**

### **1.1 Attainment**

In P1, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Achievement of a Level (ACEL) data for 2017/2018 indicates that pupils perform below Moray averages for Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing, and Numeracy. In P4, achievement of a level data for 2017/2018 highlights that pupils perform above Moray average for Listening and Talking; on a par with Moray averages for Writing; very slightly above the Moray Average in Reading; and considerably below Moray average for Numeracy. In P7, achievement of a level data for 2017/2018 indicates that children performed above Moray averages for Listening and Talking, Reading, Writing, and Numeracy. SNSA data is being used to assist teachers with their judgments at the relevant stages.

Through discussion with the Headteacher and staff, confidence in Teacher Professional Judgment (TPJ) of learner level achievement as per the Scottish Government's data return requirement for P1, P4 and P7 is increasing. Staff have benefitted from moderation activities across the Associated Schools Group (ASG) and within the school. On review of data, partnership working within the school and across the ASG and a continued focus on moderation, will secure teacher confidence in TPJ further.

The school has adopted Tracking and Monitoring of learner attainment and achievement, supported by the local authority tracking and monitoring spreadsheet tools. The Headteacher is confident that the predictions for 2019 of achievement of a level are based on a more robust evidence base and are supported by teachers' clearer professional judgement which has been focussed through aligning the National Benchmarks to curricular progressions and plans. The Headteacher is confident that progressions will soon be in place for numeracy as well as literacy which is currently being finalised.

Teachers are increasingly more aware of data, with a focus on the review of groups and individual pupils and their attainment supporting identification of attainment gaps and planning interventions in support of closing such gaps. Working with the Principal Teacher and Headteacher, practitioners have identified intervention strategies for raising attainment and meeting learning needs. Dialogue with practitioners identifies children who may benefit from wider support in Literacy, in particular, which is the area of focus for this year. Further tracking of cohorts and individual pupils over time, using all available data will support practitioners further in assessing pupil needs and identifying the impact of interventions for closing attainment gaps.

### **1.2 Wider school activities**

Newmill Primary School offers a range of pupil leadership opportunities supported and led by staff. All pupils in Primary 3 to 7 have opportunities to

be part of 'Tower' Committees/Councils which focus on a key responsibility where they are working for the school in order to effect change. Groups include Creativity, Rights and Responsibilities, Sustainability, Identity, Community, Change and Social Justice. Their ideas and activities are captured in Floor Books which are displayed in order to readily share with others. Their activities to date have effected change and included expanding the range of after school/lunchtime activities; developed leadership of playground games; and enhanced the local village environment with the planting of bulbs. Pupils have promoted the shared language of learning with the local playgroup and so have enhanced the transition to school for new pupils. Wider achievements are celebrated in Assembly and in 'Tower time' when the pupils in Primaries 3 to 7 discuss achievements and suggest where these relate to the school's vision and values. Pupil achievements are then recorded on 'post-it notes' and added to the school's vision wall display. Pupils share their understanding of the four capacities and how these relate to the school values as part of lifelong learning. Pupils record and track wider achievements in an individual Wider Achievement folder. This record includes progress in curricular areas; progress in well-being through the use of the SHANARRI wheel; and personal achievements. Wider Achievement folders are shared with Parents during Open Afternoons and comments are recorded. Pupils have been involved in the writing of their own reports although this is currently under review.

### 1.3 ASN provision

51% of pupils have identified Additional Support Needs and are catered for by differentiation within the mainstream classroom appropriate to their individual needs.

In Newmill Primary School, a position of 0.2FTE Support for Learning (SfL) teacher remains vacant, however, the Principal Teacher has adopted a strategic role in undertaking administration and supporting all staff to make effective use of additional Pupil Support Assistant time to provide in-class and discreet withdrawal for targeted support. Support staff speak of the partnerships with teachers in planning and of a sensitive and positive relationship with supported pupils. Due to recruitment difficulties for the SfL post, 0.1FTE teacher time has been converted to Pupil Support Assistant time.

Currently, the school is involved with partner agencies including Speech and Language Therapists (SALT) and Occupational Therapy. The school is aware of the process to gain access to Educational Psychology and other agencies as necessary to support pupils, their families and school staff. Support staff are involved in IEP planning either at the initial stage or in contributing to evaluations and undertaking a checklist of achievements and identifying next steps. Teachers and support staff access additional training and this has included three members of staff undertaking training on 'Talk Boost'. Currently the early data from this programme is being analysed. Teachers engage in learning communities within the ASG and also within a subgroup of the ASG (i.e. two sets of paired schools called Quad Schools along with one other school) to support new learning. Support staff are willing to undertake

training and are supported to put new skills into practice to support learners. Relationships amongst staff are very strong and informal passing of pupil information on an ongoing basis works well. PSAs find teachers approachable and they feel valued.

There are procedures in place to ensure successful P1 entry and P7 exit transitions for pupils. This includes regular informal visits to and from the Playgroup where children are already adopting the Newmill Philosophy and Language of Learning. They attend 'Tower Time' school assemblies and a more formal transition programme is in place for Term 4 with a planned timetable of events for pupils and parents. The P7 pupils from rural schools in the ASG have the opportunity to meet at the 'Loft' fortnightly to meet others socially from small schools and this will be extended to include the children from a large primary school in Term 4. Most P7 children from the rural schools come together on a residential trip and they also meet up at the rural sports which are held annually. Overall, support at transitions is working well for mainstream pupils and pupils who require additional support are known to staff and individual needs are supported when required to ensure a positive transition experience.

The school prides itself in meeting the needs of individual learners and ensuring the wellbeing of all is valued and achieved. The Headteacher recognises the need to ensure that evidence of children making progress from prior levels of achievement is gathered and outcomes tracked.

#### 1.4 Curriculum

The school community has a sound understanding of the school's vision and values, providing a good foundation for developing a relevant curriculum for learners. The Headteacher has clearly set out the requirements within a strong foundation which has included and involved all stakeholders. The Curriculum Rationale is currently under review but it is being built up around the context of the school and the shared Vision and Values. This is illustrated pictorially as part of the Vision, Values and Aims Display and is clearly visible throughout the school.

The school focus this session has been on developing progressions for Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing and in supporting understanding of achievement of a level and teacher expectations. The Health and Wellbeing of learners is a current focus and developments have included the agreement of a restorative behaviour approach 'Building Positive Relationships'.

The school plans to extend the development of curriculum progressions to wider curriculum areas, aligning these to National Benchmarks. The Headteacher is supporting this work through devising new planning formats linked directly to curriculum progressions. This will ensure all learners continue to progress through the Broad General Education.

Planning for inter-disciplinary learning has started and currently focuses on relevant situations which arise locally e.g. 'Traffic Chaos in Keith' resulting in the development of a whole school focus on 'Bridges and Landscapes'. Staff engage with national benchmarks, supported at school and ASG level with

moderation. The school is at an early stage of planning by bundling experiences and outcomes into manageable and relevant groups.

The children feel secure within the classroom to express their ideas and there is evidence of personalisation and choice. This is evidenced especially in the upper stages, where there are many opportunities for leadership and application of skills. Pupil progressions have been developed with colleagues across the ASG and all staff are given the opportunity to contribute to these.

## 1.5 Learning & Teaching

Newmill Primary School has a very positive, pupil engaging environment for learning. Reception, classroom wall space and corridor display spaces are used well to showcase not only children's learning and achievements but the process of successful learning within the vision and values of the school. The open-plan environment for two classes is well organised and accommodates quieter areas for one-to-one support. The separate early stages class is closely linked to an outdoor courtyard learning space affording the opportunity for free-flow learning in the outdoors. During the reviewing team's time at Newmill Primary School, all classes were visited at least twice in order to observe learning and teaching activities, speak with learners and review classwork.

Children engaged positively with the review team and were proud to talk about their learning experiences both by volunteering and when asked directly. By P7, children can clearly articulate their understanding of a Learning Challenge and how they undertake to be successful in achieving learning. Most lessons are well organised and structured. Most learners know what and why they are learning and how to be successful. Across classes, children are eager to learn and most children are excited about the prospect of taking their learning further. A range of learning and teaching approaches and creative ideas are employed to engage learners to ensure motivation and ownership of learning. In lessons observed, there was a mixture of questioning focused on whole-class and individuals. Whilst the culture of pupil led learning is being developed well, on the day of the review, observations were mainly of teacher led or directed learning. Learning Intentions were shared in most classes visited. Success Criteria were identifiable in most of the visits and children described opportunities they have to contribute to the Success Criteria. Plans by the school to include Learning Intentions and Success Criteria as part of the planning process for different areas of the curriculum developed will further support consistency by teachers and ownership of learning by pupils. Differentiation of success criteria for groups and individual pupils as appropriate may then be broken down further to meet individual needs.

Transitions between learning activities were generally smooth and moved at an acceptable pace. Differentiation, whilst recognised as challenging within a multi-composite lesson, is planned to meet the varied needs and ability levels of all learners in all classes. Teachers and support staff were engaged and supportive to individuals and groups throughout class time.

Pupils spoke very positively about the value of verbal feedback from their teachers. A few pupils identified the need for more consistent written feedback in their jotters from their teachers so that they were reminded of next steps especially for starting a new piece of writing. In the middle and upper stages, pupils spoke of peer assessment opportunities and the way they engaged in dialogue with one another to discuss, assess and feedforward in their learning. Very articulate pupils were able to confidently outline ways they had achieved their learning and recognised that this was worth sharing. They were articulate also in the philosophy of 'Growth Mindset' and how this can impact on their learning.

All teachers used praise to motivate and engage pupils in their learning and to encourage others to participate in their learning. Teachers made good use of ICT to reinforce and support learning and teaching activities.

#### 1.6 School buildings

Condition: minimum standard C (2017)

Suitability: minimum standard B (2017)

Newmill Primary School is situated south of the main street in the village of Newmill and was re-built in 1988. The school building is a welcoming building with a secure entrance foyer which serves as a small reception area. This is adjacent to the office and used by the Primary Administrator. The hall, staffroom, HT Office and teaching areas are accessed from a corridor beyond the reception foyer. The teaching areas include one smaller classroom which houses the P1/2/3 class and an open-plan area which is shared between P3/4/5/6, the Library area and P5/6/7. An outdoor area can be accessed from an exit near the P1/2/3 classroom. The school kitchen is situated beside the hall with a servery.

#### 1.7 Pastoral Care

Newmill Primary School has a very positive and welcoming ethos both within the playground and in the classroom. This is reflected in the way adults and pupils interact with each other both inside and outwith the classroom. Most pupils show their understanding of the school values through their interactions with each other and with staff. A clear focus on the importance of well-being is evident in each classroom and pupils talk about the well-being indicators and use them for reflection and for setting targets. Following the new 'Building Positive Relationships' approach, staff use the well-being indicators to help communicate to pupils how their behaviour/actions are impacting on the pupil's own and other children's well-being. Most pupils feel safe in both the classroom and in the playground. They are fully aware of the structures in place to keep them safe and are able to identify the staff they can go to for support. All staff receive regular training in Child Protection. The Headteacher and Administration staff use SEEMIS to record significant and pastoral events. Being that the Headteacher is not always on site, staff know who to contact should there be any concerns. Most pastoral concerns are dealt with by the Headteacher, but in her absence, this is shared by all staff. Parents

report that the Headteacher is readily available despite the paired school arrangements.

## 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

Attendance rate: 94.29% (Moray Primary School average: 94.9%)

Violence/Aggression against staff: no reported incidents were recorded (2017/2018).

There were no incidents of exclusion (2017/18).

The school has a 'Building Positive Relationships' agreement recently revised, outlining key steps to ensure resolution. Pupils feel that most children behave well and are very accepting of one another. They describe different ways in which they have become knowledgeable about 'Bullying' through Clubs and Councils as well as the opportunities given to reflect on different points of view through Circle Time. Simple but effective initiatives such as 'The Thinking Bench' and 'The Shaky Hand Gang' have been introduced to support progress. In a recent survey, 97% of pupils felt they were treated fairly.

## 2. School roll

### 2.1 Roll and roll forecast

The School Roll in 2018 (Pupil Census) is 72 pupils. Since 2013 the roll has increased by 20 pupils (from 52 pupils).

The majority of pupils (50; 69%) (based on the 2017 census) are from within the catchment area for Newmill. Less than half of pupils (22; 31%) originate from outwith catchment.

Forecasted roll: 2025 – 48 pupils  
Estimated decrease by 24 pupils over next 7 years

### 2.2 Inward placing requests

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 2, 2015/16: 4, 2016/17: 4, 2017/18: 0 (3 inward placing requests refused), 2018/2019: 3 inward placing requests.

### 2.3 Outward placing requests

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 1, 2015/16: 1, 2016/17: 0, 2017/18: 2, 2018/2019: 1 outward placing requests.

### 2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 72; Functional Capacity: 98 = 73%  
2018 School Roll: 72; Maximum Capacity: 75 = 96%

### 2.5 Class composition

2018-19: 3 classes: 3 composite classes

(Classes: Composite: P1/2/3, P3/4/5, P6/7)

## 2.6 Number of teachers

2018 – 4.00 FTE Teachers – 11 Staff in total.

Includes 1.0 FTE Headteacher, 2FTE teachers and 1.0 FTE Principal Teacher  
Currently there is not a SfL teacher in post but the school is allocated 0.2FTE FTE.

## 2.7 School roll

2018 School Roll: 72

## 3. Financial position

### 3.1 Budgeted running cost

The cost per pupil in 2018/2019 (based on current roll: 72) is £3712.

### 3.2 Financial trends

School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 3.98% underspend restricted to scheme rules of 2.5%. This left an underspend of £8613 to take forward into 2018-19.

### 3.3 Financial plans

The Head Teacher uses devolved budget effectively for whole school developments, linked in with school self-evaluation and School Improvement Plan Priorities. This has included the purchase of a portable Promethean board for use in the GP Room (Hall), out-door play equipment, STEM equipment and the up-grading of the Library. PEF funding has also been used to employ a PSA who has been utilised in the classroom to undertake Literacy interventions (e.g. 5 minute Boxes). Talk Boost training and resources have also been bought through this funding.

The Parent Council has been very supportive and contributed positively to the finances with a healthy balance of £7063.83 raised from Coffee Mornings and a Christmas Concert. The Parent Council has purchased new signage for the school, a trolley for the Football/Cross Country teams when they travel to events, strips for teams, and High Visibility vests. During session 2017-18 and in previous years, the Parent Council heightened the fencing on the Playground and re-seeded the grassed area. The Parent Council also arranged for the erection of a Mud Kitchen in the Courtyard, and a new shed in the playground to store outdoor equipment.

## 4. Staff Wellbeing and Development

### 4.1 Availability of Teachers

There is a full complement of class teachers currently but that is about to change due to the departure of the PT. There is a vacancy for a 0.2FTE Support for Learning Teacher.

#### 4.2 Headteacher Relief Time

Due to the paired schools arrangement, the Headteacher does not have a teaching commitment although due to staffing issues in both schools she has had to undertake cover for class teachers on a fairly long term basis.

#### 4.3 Leadership Capacity

The Headteacher provides clear direction to the school, managing the pace of change focused around the School Improvement priorities. The Principal Teacher currently takes a lead in relation to the administration and organisation of support for children with additional support needs. This post is about to become vacant as a result of the current post holder moving to another post. Staff and pupils are encouraged to lead on a range of priorities and initiatives.

#### 4.4 Staff Development and the Leadership of Change

Professional Review and Development of teachers and the Employee Review and Development of support staff ensure that staff focus on a set of clear priorities and initiatives and work effectively together. Teachers and support staff recognise the positive changes implemented by the current Headteacher following a period of instability. The emphasis on promoting consistency with regard to behaviour and relationships, including working on Children's Rights, has been appreciated by staff. The current focus on raising attainment through developing different interventions and strategies for literacy has been supported by CPD opportunities, both in-house and outwith the school, and specific training for key staff has been provided. All staff are responsible for promoting a Positive Growth Mindset.

### 5. Schools Accessibility

#### 5.1 Home to school transport time

Most pupils live within the village and surrounding area. It is anticipated that all pupils travel no more than 30 minutes to school in normal traffic.

#### 5.2 Distance to another suitable school

Nearest schools are Keith Primary School and St. Thomas RC Primary School in the town of Keith (1.5 and 1.75 miles approximate travel time respectively by road and is approximately 5-8 minutes); Crossroads to the north east (4.3 miles approximately 8 minutes by road) and Botriphnie, the paired school, to the south west (6.9 miles approximately 13 minutes by road).

#### 5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/training organisations

Co-operative working arrangements as common with other primary schools exist among the ASG. Transition arrangements for P7 – S1 are in place with

Keith Grammar School (1.5 miles away approximately and 5 minutes travel by road). Enhanced provision arrangements when required are in place with Keith Primary School and Keith Grammar School. (Both 1.5 miles away approximately and 5 minutes travel by road)

## **6 Strong Links with the Community**

### **6.1 Parents' Views**

Parents praised the Headteacher and the staff, including support staff, for their commitment to the school; their approachability; and the strong emphasis which is placed on pupil voice effecting change. They maintain that pupils in Newmill Primary School look forward to coming to school and they are well supported to aim for high standards of behaviour and engagement with learning. They are impressed with the Communication between school and home which is open, informative and is provided digitally as well as in paper format.

Parents applaud the opportunities which they are given to learn about the work of the school; to understand new initiatives e.g. 'The PIT into practice'; and to enjoy the events which are arranged to share the talents of the children.

Parents are eager to support the school by fund raising, volunteering and attending opportunities given for children to share their learning. They spoke positively of how well they feel ASN/ESN children are supported within the school.

### **6.2 Degree and Quality of Parental Involvement**

Parents are active and this includes a parent council which supports the school financially and provide volunteers as required. Parents spoke knowledgeably about the children's learning, their involvement in the review of the vision and values of the school as well as the 'Building Positive Relationships' review.

### **6.3 Contribution of the school to the community**

The school has strong links with the local Playgroup which meets in the Village Hall situated across the road from the school playground and car park. Local business partnerships such as with a local distillery and supermarket have supported school developments such as the outdoor classroom area to promote 'Playful Learning Experiences'.

The school engages positively in village life including planting flowers at the Clock Tower and inviting members of the community e.g. members of the 'Flying Friendship' Group to attend the school concert.

### **6.4 Other Provision (egg Nursery)**

The school does not have a nursery provision.

### **6.5 Multi-function use of the building**

Moray primary schools are not formally let for community groups and activities. No informal arrangements are currently in place.

#### 6.6 Capacity in nearest schools

Keith Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 232/ Functional Capacity: 462 = 70%

St. Thomas RC Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 63/ Functional Capacity: 75= 84%

Crossroads Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 19/ Functional Capacity 50 = 38%

Botriphnie Primary School - Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 23/ Functional Capacity 50 = 46%

Rothiemay Primary School-Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 61 / Functional Capacity 75 = 81%

### **Conclusions**

On the basis of the evaluations of criteria 1-6, Newmill Primary School is currently a sustainable school but with the projected drop in school roll it could become unsustainable. The roll and enrolment forecasts indicate that the school will be variable over the next 7 years, indicated to fall to approximately 48 pupils in 2025. It has the potential to be sustainable if smaller schools were to merge within it. The inability to fill the part-time Support for Learning Teacher vacancy potentially identifies staffing problems in a small school.

### **Recommendations**

The following options could be considered:

- Consider campus leadership model
- Consider merging with Crossroads PS or Botriphnie PS on current campus.
- Consider merger with Keith Primary School and rezoning to ensure the shortest travel times for children.

### **Strengths**

- The leadership of the Headteacher in building the foundations of a positive learning environment for all, as well as progressing with areas for school improvement, and inspiring and leading staff, pupils and parents to progress together
- Well-mannered children who are eager to learn and are knowledgeable and articulate about the vision and values of their school.

- A positive learning environment where the wellbeing of all is important to staff and children's achievements are celebrated.
- A strong community spirit which is enjoyed by the school community and the Newmill Community at large.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Continue with plans to build a clear Curriculum Rationale which identifies how the curriculum will be organised and developed.
- Continue with plans to ensure there are clear learning pathways for all curricular areas.
- As the curriculum is refreshed and reviewed, ensure shared and consistent expectations for the quality and presentation of learning records across all stages.
- Maintain a clear focus on raising attainment and tracking and monitoring cohorts to ensure the appropriate interventions are in place.

# **ROTHIEMAY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **1. Quality Educational Experience**

### **1.1 Attainment**

In P1, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) achievement of a level (ACEL) data for 2017/2018 indicates that pupils perform significantly below Moray averages for Reading and Numeracy, Writing Listening and Talking. In P4, ACEL Data for 2017/2018 highlights that pupils perform above Moray average for Listening and Talking, and notably below Moray averages for Reading, Writing and Numeracy. In P7, ACEL data for 2017/2018 indicates that children performed above the Moray averages for Reading, Listening and Talking, and Numeracy. Children achieved below Moray averages for Writing. Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) data is now being used to assist teachers with their judgements.

Through discussion with the Headteacher and staff, confidence in Teacher Professional Judgement (TPJ) of learner level achievement as per the Scottish Government's data return requirement for key stages (P1, P4, P7) has increased in the last year. Staff expectations are rising, and the majority of staff have used collegiate time well, engaging with National benchmarks and participating in cross-associated Schools Group (ASG) moderation activities focusing on Numeracy and Literacy. The formal opportunity for rich professional dialogue has given teachers the confidence to progress in this area. This has been further supported by working with Crossroads, Botriphnie and Newmill Primaries with a focus on Assessment for Learning (AfL) by linking to quality learning intentions and success criteria.

The Moray Tracking and Monitoring tool has recently been implemented to monitor attainment and achievement. Tracking and Monitoring meetings are planned to be held three times a year (November, February and May) with all teaching staff involved so that information can be shared and effective planning across the stages can take place, with a particular focus on Numeracy and Literacy. Teachers are increasingly more aware of data and these meetings are supporting practitioners to work in partnership in further assessing pupil needs, identifying attainments gaps and agreeing appropriate interventions.

The ASN teacher works closely with the Headteacher and staff by meeting with them termly to ensure targets are being met. After reviewing the deployment of Pupil Support Assistants, they are now being utilised more effectively to support with identified and agreed learning interventions for specific children or groups of children. A range of targeted and universal interventions have been identified and are in the process of being implemented. "Emerging Literacy" was highlighted as having an impact on P1-3 and will be cascaded to all staff to support implementation of strategies across the whole school to ensure progression and impact. Resources to support Numeracy like Numicon and the '5 Minute Boxes' have been purchased using Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) monies and will be implemented once training has taken place in May. Health and Wellbeing remains a focus

on the School Improvement plan with the Whole School Quality Circle Time Model, Growth Mind-set, Restorative Approaches and Nurture remaining high priorities. The creation of a Nurture area is also supporting progress in this area.

The use of Learning Logs ensures children are reflecting on their learning and are empowered to consider their progress and next steps. Parents also reported that these logs provided them with invaluable information about their child's attainment, achievement and their next steps; thereby supporting them to raise attainment in the school.

## 1.2 Wider School Activities

Despite Rothiemay's rurality, parents and pupils commented on the varied opportunities available to their children. The school widely promotes activities run by the Active Schools Team, volunteer parents and other partners via newsletters and e-mail. Activities have included jogging, rugby, Co-ordination and Balance, street dance and basketball. The programme changes and is adapted to meet the needs of the children as required. Many of the activities are based in Keith, but the Active Schools Co-ordinator has a very strong relationship with the school attending all assemblies so she can promote activities taking place. Developing leadership opportunities by training P7 pupils how to play Botcha, has supported them to teach younger pupils these skills during intervals and lunchtimes whilst also enhancing their leadership skills. In collaboration with the ASG, P6/7 pupils are given the opportunity to attend workshops run by the Scottish Opera. This provides a rich opportunity for Rothiemay Primary pupils to work with other children within the ASG. Most pupils reported that the activities on offer helped them to develop a range of skills to support their physical and emotional development, whilst also preparing them for learning, life and work.

The Parent Council also support wider school activities, fundraising and social events like Bingo evenings. They fund the Princes Trust to work with children on their skills in a range of areas including hockey, basketball and football. The class teachers also benefit from this input as it enhances their professional development. Having close links with the community drives the direction of some of the fundraising, as community and school are closely interlinked. One such project aims to raise money for a defibrillator in the community. As part of this project, the Parent Council have funded First Aid training for all P5-7 pupils. Taking part in a variety of fundraising events like Children in Need, Red Nose Day and World Book Day has further contributed to the children's understanding of the impact they can have on their communities, both locally and nationally.

Initial steps have been taken to broaden children's understanding of children's rights, and local, national and global issues by signing up for UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA). Pupils stated that they are listened to and their views about the school are given consideration, but this is done in an informal manner by speaking to class teachers or the Headteacher. Assemblies every two weeks are used to celebrate the success of pupils who have been identified as 'Pupil of the Week' by demonstrating they have

achieved an agreed target. Pupils reported that these are motivating in terms of overall personal performance. A Pupil Council has been in operation, but there is scope for it to be refreshed with a renewed focus on realising and embedding the school's updated vision and values. Full implementation of wider accreditation schemes and initiatives like RRSA will provide a framework for planning and extend leadership opportunities for class pupils. It will also enhance pupil voice, ensure children have a deeper understanding of global issues and children's rights, and develop sustainable groups which reflect the needs and interests of the whole school community. Profiling of pupil's wider achievements both in and out of school also needs to be captured.

### 1.3 ASN Provision

Within the 2018 census, there are 25 pupils registered with Additional Support Needs, this equates to 41 % of the school roll (61) – this is above the Moray primary school average of 32% during session 18/19.

The ASN Teacher, who has returned to the post in January working 0.2 FTE, has had a positive impact on learners and is able to support the Headteacher and class teachers to implement structures and appropriate supporting paperwork to evidence interventions and share the impact of these interventions with parents.

Staff have a clear understanding of the staged intervention process and use this to identify learners' needs within their classrooms. Increased use of Learning Profiles and Strategies (LPS) is supporting staff in this area. Staff make some use of digital technology to support learners and there is scope for further development to support and challenge learners using a wide range of programs which are now available.

The Support Staff team are clear about their role in supporting learners and are deployed according to a needs based assessment. They feel valued by the school community as a whole and contribute to the strong, positive relationships within the school. They have accessed First Aid, Food Hygiene and Behaviour Management training and would benefit from the opportunity to continue to access further appropriate training suitable to the school context of needs. Much of the communication between support staff and class teachers is informal and there are opportunities for this to be developed as part of a formal structure of information sharing linked to planning outcomes for learners to support differentiation and inclusion.

The school offers a nurturing ethos and the resources are in place to support individual learners who have a variety of complex needs. There is access to a nurture area which provides opportunities to create music or other individual/small group activities. This use should be maximised for learners to offer individual programmes of work. The Headteacher has been proactive in contacting outside agencies and is flexible in her approach to try to secure the best outcomes for learners with complex needs. There are plans to further adapt the sensory room to continue supporting learners as their needs develop or change over time.

The Pupil Equity Fund has provided some resources to offer individual support in numeracy and this will dovetail with the adoption of the Emerging Literacy working, which will support attainment progress in the early level of the curriculum and beyond.

Parents spoke highly of the individualised programmes for children which ensured bespoke support was in place that met their children's needs. Feedback about supports identified and the impact this was having was a major strength as it encouraged growth in all their children.

#### 1.4 Curriculum

The school's vision is "Moving Forward Together" which aligns with the school values of respect, honesty, fairness and trust. The school vision and values are not currently embedded within the life of the school. The school have identified a need to re-visit the school's vision to ensure it is shaped by clear values and the unique context of the school and its community. Consultation with all stakeholders has started in this area. The refreshed vision and values must be embedded within the life of the school and communicated regularly through assemblies and classrooms.

The Headteacher is also in the early stages of reviewing and developing the school's curriculum rationale with all stakeholders as part of the school improvement programme. It is vital the unique features of the school community inform the design of the curriculum. The school is using a variety of frameworks for Numeracy, Writing and Spelling. Progressing with this work at pace, the school now needs to develop progressive frameworks for Reading and all other curricular areas. This will support teachers in strengthening learner progression whilst ensuring that children are developing skills in different areas of the curriculum. Working with ASG Primary and Secondary colleagues, there is potential to undertake joint sourcing and implementation of wider curricular area progressions. Due to the number of composite classes, the school is aware of the need for teachers to liaise between stages to ensure progression, breadth and depth. Adopting a common planning format and building formal meetings into the Working Time Agreement for this purpose would further support progress being made in this area.

There were a few examples of children being given the opportunity to take their learning outdoors. The unique setting of the school is ideal to use the outdoor areas more frequently when planning children's learning in a progressive way.

Examples of the school providing opportunities to develop partnerships with the community and local business are at an early stage. The school should now further develop meaningful opportunities for children to learn about the world of work by engaging with the Career Education Standards, Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and the Moray Skills Pathway when reviewing the curriculum rationale.

#### 1.5 Learning & Teaching

Across the school, children experience positive relationships with staff and peers and there is a happy, calm atmosphere in the school which is conducive to a positive learning environment. Pupils report they enjoy school and are willing and positive participants in their learning. They are polite, mannerly and talk about their school with pride. During our time at Rothiemay Primary School, a full programme of classroom visits was undertaken to observe learning and teaching activities, review class work and jotter work, and engage learners in conversation about their learning.

The majority of pupils engaged well in their lessons and enjoyed their learning. There was not consistency in learning and teaching across the school. In the majority of lessons, children are not sufficiently challenged, and the pace of learning is too slow - too slow to start and time is not effectively used to maximise learning opportunities. The school now needs to review how staff utilise time to always ensure purposeful and challenging lessons where optimal learning is taking place. There was some evidence of independent learning; however in the majority of lessons there was an emphasis on teacher led learning with limited opportunities for children to lead learning or become actively involved. In almost all lessons there was a lack of differentiation. Approaches to differentiation to support learning should now be explored and implemented across the school to best meet the needs of all learners.

Across the school learning intentions are generally shared in Writing lessons but less consistently in other curricular areas. There is a need for the school to develop consistency in the use of clear and well-matched learning intentions and success criteria and ensure these reflect the intended learning and assessment. Involving children in the co-construction of success criteria would aid differentiation, target setting and enhance their understanding of how, what and why they learn.

Most children spoke positively about being actively encouraged to use self and peer assessment to effectively support their learning and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and skills developed. They relished the opportunity to reflect on their learning and evaluate their learning against others. Most children were able to give effective feedback to their peers and suggest ways in which they could improve. A growth mindset culture was clearly embedded in the school which allowed all pupils to see mistakes as learning opportunities.

Assessment is not yet integral to planning for effective learning and staff need to develop a whole school approach to assessment which consistently evidences breadth, challenge and application of learning. Teachers have recently engaged with the Moray Tracking and Monitoring system and should continue to deepen their understanding of national standards to support planning for progression in learning to make more robust assessments of children's progress and inform their planning.

## 1.6 School buildings

Condition: standard C (2017)

Suitability: standard B (2017)

Rothiemay Primary School is a traditional Victorian building located in the centre of the parish of Milltown of Rothiemay and serves the village and the surrounding countryside area. It lies on the banks of the River Deveron and borders neighbouring Aberdeenshire. Rothiemay Primary School provides an educational service to children from P1-P7. It is a nondenominational primary school.

Rothiemay is a well organised space. The school office is located at the main entrance and is used by the Headteacher and Administration Assistant. The school consists of three classrooms, a nurture room, a quiet room (general purpose room), a hall, and a playgroup room. Outside there is a playground, a playing field, a memorial garden and a Trim Trail assault course. The school continues to consider ways to develop the outdoor learning space and wild life area.

## 1.7 Pastoral Care

Rothiemay Primary is a welcoming school community that provides a happy, supportive, caring and inclusive learning environment where the children are constantly encouraged to support each other with both their learning and wellbeing needs. A strong sense of family and interconnectedness is a strength in the school where equity for all is promoted and where pupils enjoy the opportunities for supporting others in their learning. Positive relationships were evident between pupils, staff, parents and the wider community, and all stated feeling valued. All children reported feeling safe and could articulate clearly that they could approach any member of staff to report concerns or ask for help. Issues are resolved with minimal fuss and as quickly as possible. Bullying was not identified as a problem at Rothiemay Primary by pupils, staff or parents. There are appropriate Child Protection procedures in place in line with Moray Council policies.

All staff are sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing needs of each individual child and formal structures are being put in place by the Headteacher to ensure it is considered the responsibility of all. In some classes the wellbeing wheel is being used to assess children's wellbeing needs. In order to effectively track and monitor the wellbeing of children this should be adopted by all classes and aligned with the Moray Tracking and Monitoring tool. A focus on "Growth Mindset" has supported the children to become more resilient. Parents found sessions delivered about this initiative very informative and helpful. The Headteacher was complimented by parents on her ability to identify different and often creative ways of supporting individual children and the positive impact it has had on building their self-esteem and confidence. As identified in the School's improvement plan, whole school engagement with the Rights Respecting School Award and the introduction of the Quality Circle Time Model would support and further develop the work already being undertaken in this area.

## 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

Attendance rate: 95.39 (Moray Primary School average: 94.9%)  
Violence/Aggression against staff: no reported incidents (2017/2018)  
There was one exclusion (2017/18).

There is currently no identified need for a formal behaviour system in the school. "Golden Time" is used as an incentive to manage behaviour. Pupils who reported having their golden time cut back or removed stated it did not motivate them to change their behaviour. A rewards system has been introduced in some classes but was not being used consistently in all classes. Parents commented on how behaviour had improved since the appointment of the new Headteacher and although not a major concern, any issues are now dealt with swiftly and efficiently. Pupils also helped to shape classroom/playground rules which parents and pupils felt had a positive impact on the behaviour overall. The use of restorative approaches is also impacting positively.

## 2. School roll

### 2.1 Roll and roll forecast

The School Roll in 2017 (Pupil Census) is 61 pupils. Since 2013 the roll has increased from 44 to 61 (current roll, 2018; 61 pupils)

Forecasted roll: 2025 – 49  
Estimated decrease by 12 pupils over next 6 years

### 2.2 Inward placing requests

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 0, 2015/16: 1, 2016/17: 2, 2017/18: 1, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 2 inward placing requests

### 2.3 Outward placing requests

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 2, 2015/16: 0, 2016/17: 0, 2017/18: 0, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 2 outward placing requests

### 2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity

2018 School Roll: 61; Functional Capacity: 75 = 81%  
2018 School Roll: 61; Maximum Capacity: 94 = 65%

### 2.5 Class composition

2018-19: 3 classes: 3 composites  
(Classes: Composite: P1/2/3, P3/4/5, P6/7)

### 2.6 Number of teachers

2018 – 3.4 FTE Teachers – 3 Teachers, ASN Teacher (2days)/McCrone (2 days)

1.0 FTE Headteacher, who is a paired Headteacher with Crossroads Primary, and 3.4 FTE Teachers

There are a number of PSAs (4 Part-time) who support in the school in a variety of roles within and out with the classroom.

#### 2.7 School roll

Current (2018) School roll: 61

### **3. Financial position**

#### 3.1 Budgeted running cost

The cost per pupil in 2018/2019 (based on current roll: 93) is £3606

#### 3.2 Financial trends

School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 4.58% underspend which equates to £8283.

#### 3.3 Financial plans

There are no major financial plans other than purchase of resources to support and enhance learning and teaching and the general upkeep of the building.

### **4. Staff Wellbeing and Development**

#### 4.1 Availability of Teachers

Rothiemay Primary School is fully staffed at this time. Long term absence at the end of 2018 impacted greatly on the ability to deliver on key priorities within the School Improvement Plan.

PE and Art are offered across all stages by class teachers. The Princes Trust is funded by the Parent Council to provide additional PE and there is a visiting Music Specialist.

#### 4.2 Headteacher Relief Time

Rothiemay Primary has a paired headship with Crossroads Primary. The Headteacher is the sole member of Senior Leadership at Rothiemay Primary School. The Headteacher recognises the substantive Principal Teacher as her Extended Leadership Team for support and challenge, as well as leadership when she attends the other school.

#### 4.3 Leadership Capacity

The Headteacher provides clear direction to the school, sensitively managing the pace of change around four key School Improvement priorities. Staff are becoming increasingly empowered to be involved in a range of priorities and initiatives for school improvement including self-evaluation. Parents value the strong leadership of the Headteacher and the home-school communication links. Pupils would welcome more leadership opportunities, including

participation in committees, to support school improvement and skills development.

#### 4.4 Staff Development and Leadership of Improvement of Change

Staff have begun to work closely with the Headteacher on formal and informal self-evaluation activities, actively discussing and identifying school priorities and next steps. Building relationships with the children, families and staff has been a major focus for the Headteacher, and teachers, support staff and parents recognise the positive changes implemented so far by the Headteacher. Pace of change was identified as manageable by staff, but now requires to be accelerated to ensure satisfactory progress.

Further development of pupil and staff leadership opportunities will allow for greater ownership of change. Staff should identify their areas of strength and how they could more effectively contribute to school improvement. Parents welcome the positive changes in recent times led by the Headteacher, proactive and positive in communication, taking action based on feedback on a range of issues from behaviour to supporting their child's learning.

### 5. Schools Accessibility

#### 5.1 Home to school transport time

The majority of pupils (51; 84%) are from within catchment in Rothiemay. Less than half of pupils (10; 16%) originate from out with catchment. Most children in this latter category it is anticipated, travel for less than 30 minutes.

#### 5.2 Distance to another suitable school

Nearest schools to Rothiemay Primary School are identified as Crossroads Primary School (8.5 miles; 13 minutes approximate travel via B9117 and A95) and Newmill Primary School (8.3 miles; 13 minutes approximate travel via A95 and B9117). Keith Primary School also within the ASG is within travelling distance (8.5 miles; 13 minutes approximate travel via B9117 and A95).

#### 5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/training organisations

Rothiemay has a paired headship with Crossroads Primary and a range of collegiate activities take place between the two schools. They also work very closely with Botriphne Primary and Newmill Primary as they are schools with a similar rural profile. Co-operative working arrangements as common with other Primary Schools exist among the ASG. This includes Moderation activities underway including Curriculum transition work (Writing). Transition arrangements for P7-S1 and enhanced transitions for ASN pupils are in place with Keith Grammar School (8.5 miles; 13 minutes approximate travel via B9117 and A95).

### 6. Strong Links with the Community

## 6.1 Parents' Views

Parents are pleased with the school, and in particular, the regular communication via newsletters, e-mails and telephone calls. Through focus group discussions with 6 parents, comments were made about the constant formal and informal feedback received from the school about their child's progress – homework, Learning Logs, settling in interviews, and parents' evenings to name a few. They acknowledged that since the new Headteacher had taken over, they are being given increasing opportunities to contribute their views. For example, when visiting the school for an assembly recently, their views about the vision and values of the school were collated.

Parents welcome transition opportunities including extended transition (Additional Support Needs) and wider pastoral support of their children to achieve and succeed. They feel staff are genuinely interested in their children and appreciate the approachability of staff and the 'open door' nature of the school when they have any queries. Some parents spoke about the bespoke and often very creative support their children received which ensured individual needs are met.

## 6.2 Degree and Quality of Parental Involvement

The school has a Parent Council which meets once per term. It provides parents with an effective link with the school and the opportunity to engage in fundraising and school improvement activities. Parents are invited into school in order to share learning and speak highly of the work the school are doing to integrate home, school and work life. Growth Mindset Information sessions were well received and parents are keen for more family learning sessions to take place. Two parents run Jog Scotland every Monday lunchtime. Historically, parents helped in the classrooms at various points of the week. Parents are keen for this to be re-established; indeed, parents want to be offered more opportunities for engagement. The school recognises the need to continue to develop strategies for building meaningful parental involvement and opportunities for family learning.

## 6.3 Contribution of the school to the Community

The links between the community and the school are steadily growing. A strong link has been established with Balhousie Care Home where the residents visit the children in school and vice versa. This link has continued into the P1/2/3 class and the residents have been invited to share learning during curricular afternoons and to attend Christmas and end of term performances. Working closely with the community the pupils at Rothiemay Primary have supported the 'Big Cycle' and the provision of a de-fibulator in the village. As a result of this work, the parent council have provided First Aid Training for all children in p5-7. The wider community is used on a regular basis as a context for learning across the school and for a range of curricular

areas; however, this is not yet in a planned, progressive way and have been identified as the school's next steps.

#### 6.4 Other Provision (e.g. Nursery)

The school also incorporates a partner provider playgroup class which is located within the school grounds. Currently 17 children are registered in the nursery with a maximum of 12 per session. The playgroup is run in half-day sessions.

#### 6.5 Multi-function use of building

The school building is in average decorative order and state of repair, with a variety of rooms and general purpose areas suitable for a range of activities and uses. The Headteacher has identified areas for improvement and is addressing these as and when the budget allows.

The school houses the Partnership playgroup in an area adjoining the school building. The playgroup has access to the school toilets and playground area.

In Moray, Primary Schools are not currently let for community groups and activities. No informal arrangements for school building use are currently in place.

#### 6.6 Capacity in nearest schools

##### Crossroads Primary

2018 School Roll: 19; Functional Capacity: 50 = 38%

2018 School Roll: 19; Maximum Capacity: 66 = 29%

##### Newmill Primary

2018 School Roll: 72; Functional Capacity: 98 = 73%

2018 School Roll: 72; Maximum Capacity: 75 = 96%

##### Keith Primary

2018 School Roll: 323; Functional Capacity: 462 = 70%

2018 School Roll: 323; Maximum Capacity: 482 = 67%

### **Conclusions**

Rothiemay Primary School offers pupils a range of curricular experiences supported by a team of dedicated practitioners (teaching and non-teaching) in a supportive, inclusive and community school environment. Capably led by the Headteacher using devolved budget effectively, staff present as a team of practitioners, increasingly working together to provide a variety of learning experiences to meet a range of learning needs.

It is noted that overall, based on the evaluations of criteria 1-6, Rothiemay Primary School is a sustainable school. It is further noted that the roll and enrolment forecasts indicate that the school will fall below the minimum roll threshold for a

primary school in a rural area (below 90 pupils per section 6.7, "Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools", 2016; Annex B – Rural Schools list), classed as a non-denominational school serving an accessible rural area.

Roll prediction indicates a decrease of 12 pupils over the next 7 years. With current functional capacity (65%) and maximum capacity (52%) alongside future reduction in school roll anticipated, Rothiemay Primary School has future capacity to receive additional pupils from within or out with existing catchment area.

### **Recommendations**

- Consider campus leadership model
- Consider merger with Keith, Newmill or Crossroads Primary Schools and rezoning to ensure the shortest travel times for children.

### **Areas of Strength**

- After a considerable period of changing leadership the school is now in a position to move forward with their improvement agenda.
- The leadership and commitment of the Headteacher, by working collaboratively with the school community to identify and progress with areas for school improvement, is recognised by all.
- Positive, caring and inclusive school ethos and culture, which is supported by mutually respectful relationships, ensuring all children feel safe and happy.
- Articulate and reflective learners who are motivated to attain and achieve by supporting and evaluating each other's learning.

### **Areas for Improvement**

- Continue with the planned review of the school's vision, values and curriculum rationale.
- Further develop leadership roles and responsibilities for staff and pupils in order to build capacity and drive forward school improvement.
- Collegiately develop consistent approaches to Learning and Teaching at all stages with a particular focus on pace, challenge and differentiation for progression in learning.
- Continue to develop approaches to tracking and monitoring of pupil progress to ensure it aids improvement of attainment, especially at Early and First level.

# **ST THOMAS R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **1. Quality Educational Experience**

### **1.1 Attainment**

In P1, Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) achievement of a level (ACEL) data for 2017/2018 indicates that pupils perform above Moray average for Numeracy, in line with Moray average for Writing and below Moray averages for Reading, Listening and Talking. In P4, ACEL data for 2017/2018 highlights that pupils perform below Moray averages for Reading, Writing, Listening and Talking, and Numeracy. In P7, ACEL data indicates that children performed above Moray averages for Reading, Listening and Talking, and Numeracy and below Moray average for Writing. Scottish National Standardised Assessment (SNSA) data is being used to assist teachers with their judgments.

Through discussion with staff, confidence in Teacher Professional Judgment (TPJ) of learner level achievement as per the Scottish Government's data return requirement for key stages (P1, P4, P7) is growing. Staff have engaged in moderation activities within the Keith Associated Schools Group (ASG). Writing and Numeracy have been identified as key areas of focus, with staff engaging with National Benchmarks and participating in cross-ASG moderation activities. This has included unpicking how best to approach moderation and reviewing evidence of children working at particular Curriculum for Excellence levels. Cross-stage planning has allowed for partnership working at the planning stage, ensuring consistency in planning approach and curriculum coverage.

Staff are wholly committed to school improvement and engage in a range of collegiate activities for learner support and raising attainment. This has included recent ongoing work on Curriculum Rationale, work on Curriculum Progressions, developing wider support partnerships, and interventions in support and challenge of learning. The latter has included work on Emerging Literacy and Talkboost for literacy and language development, introduction of "5-minute boxes" for Numeracy and Literacy support, differentiated Writing groups and involvement in local authority SEAL (Stages of Early Arithmetical Learning) training.

Working closely with the Support for Learning (SfL) Teacher, practitioners have identified children in need of targeted interventions, with monitoring of staged interventions and wellbeing undertaken through a RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rating process. This includes children with identified Additional Support Needs (ASN) with interventions inclusive of soft starts, regular check-ins, nurture focused groups (including "Library Lunch", "Munch Club"), Literacy and Numeracy based interventions. Staff work well together through regular dialogue and discussion on children's progress and ways to further support them. Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) monies have also been used for Pupil Support Assistant (PSA) hours for recovery work in closing gaps in identified children's learning, focused on Literacy and Numeracy intervention.

The school has not yet fully embraced Tracking and Monitoring of learner attainment and achievement, and will be supported by the local authority Tracking and Monitoring spreadsheet tools next session. While not fully data-led, staff do know children well, using information available to them (class based assessments and SNSA) and local knowledge to enact interventions in support of learning. Further tracking of cohorts and individual pupils over time, using all available data will support practitioners further in assessing pupil needs and impact of interventions for closing attainment gaps. Supported by regular tracking meetings involving all practitioners across stages, this will also ensure timely intervention for raising attainment.

## 1.2 Wider school activities

All staff take a keen interest in the wellbeing, social and emotional needs of pupils. There are a number of wider opportunities open to pupils including the lunchtime “Munch Club”, “Quines Club” and the “Corn and Colouring Club”. Munch Club runs on a weekly basis led by the Support for Learning Teacher with children identified for further support. Pupils eat lunch together and chat through issues that may be worrying them and discuss possible approaches to a variety of situations. In the P6-7 class there are only 6 girls, so Quines Club, run by the class teacher, is targeted to meet their social needs and interests specifically. Corn (popcorn) and Colouring Club, focuses on mindfulness principles resulting in calmness and more positive socialisation and learning.

After-school activities benefit the majority of children and change dependent on the availability of coaches and have included basketball, rugby, tennis and football. Children have also been involved in past pupil leadership groups including Eco Group and Pupil Council. Active Schools run a range of activities for P7 pupils across the small schools in Keith to support their transition to High School. “The Loft” further support P7-S1 transition through their rural schools project, providing reassurance, building relationships and developing confidence in children participating. Friday assemblies are varied and regularly celebrate pupils’ achievements outside school. Many opportunities are further celebrated in school and promoted for children to engage with around Keith, Buckie and Elgin. Pupils and staff all take an active role in fundraising events in and out of school hours for nursery, school and St Thomas’ Church. This session, activities have included a very successful MacMillan Coffee Afternoon organised by P6/7 who carried out the preparations and hosted the event, raising a considerable amount of money for charity.

Learners in Primary 3 to Primary 7 further benefit from learning Mandarin as part of local authority Confucious funding on a weekly basis, and the choir master from the diocese of Aberdeen also visits weekly. Opportunities to engage in offsite learning within Keith and wider afield are taken, including the annual residential activity holiday. Many of the children attend the Catholic groups and the school is committed to partaking in The Services of Mass at St Thomas’ RC church next to the school. Pupils attend The Parish Mass on Fridays and follow this up with work in school in assemblies and in their

classes. Some of the children are altar servers and there is a link between school and church in preparation for the sacraments.

Through discussions, children are keen to embrace further pupil leadership opportunities. This includes previously formed groups including Eco Group and wider school leadership formerly offered by Pupil Council. This will support wider experiences and skills development of children, taking ownership and supporting school improvement further.

### 1.3 ASN provision

Of the 63 pupils on roll, 39 are registered as having Additional Support Needs (ASN - 62%). This is significantly higher than the Moray average (33% - 2017/2018).

Among the 39 children registered with ASN, there are 5 children with Additional Needs Funding with dedicated support staff allocated. Emerging needs identified in the Nursery indicate that there will be further support required in school in the future, and the Nursery provision reflects the requirement to plan for pupils with a range of Additional Needs. There are four children for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL), each acquiring English spoken language at varied pace. These children are fully integrated into the classes and are supported by staff and peers.

Learner profiles are completed using the Moray standard profile for all pupils with ASN and these are shared with parents and all staff three times per year. Targets are SMART and negotiated through evidence based discussions. The SfL teacher is employed for four days and works with pupils within the classroom and through identified targeted intervention groups. The SfL teacher also leads on the wider GIRFEC agenda, attending Child's Planning meetings and leading on restorative approach strategies. In addition, the SfL teacher had recently taken over the mentoring of the probationer teacher in P6/7, and was supporting cross school collaboration, in the absence of a Headteacher at time of visit.

Pupil Support Assistants (PSAs) work with pupils on various interventions in support of learning, both in and out of class. There has been recent, measured success with the "Five Minute Boxes" and with interventions such as "Talk Boost", as well as digital tools like "Nessy" for children in need of accelerated learning in shorter bursts. Together with the SfL teacher, PSAs access training and resources to support improvements in their practice such as the Educational Psychology training on Precision Teaching and Boxall Profiling.

Work with wider agencies for training and support extends also to fostering positive relationships with those providing services directly to schools and families. The school invests in Home School Link working for vulnerable families. A Solution Orientated approach means that most families willingly and actively engage and support is effective in improving Health and Wellbeing outcomes for learners.

Enhanced transition to high school is personalised where necessary and begins in P6 for some children, with full days in P7 for all pupils transitioning with identified additional support. The classroom environments are generally conducive to learning for pupils with sensory and physical needs, although there are some restrictions on storage making a few areas cluttered. Toilet facilities within school are sufficient to meet the current need.

The SfL teacher monitors every child on staged intervention (beyond Universal Intervention Stage 0) through a rag rating system and can quickly see at review points and throughout the year, where vulnerability is most critical and intervention is working well. This also supports dialogue with practitioners across the school and for further interventions to be put in place. Overall the school exhibits a nurturing and positive ethos, inclusive of a diverse range of learners with individual learning and social needs, who are respected and relate positively to all staff across the school. This includes canteen staff, janitorial staff, the office staff and all who work in class. Children relate well to one another and also to the wider community. They are listened to and cared for by a committed and conscientious staff team.

#### 1.4 Curriculum

Joint strategic planning and appropriately resourced CPD opportunities with the other Keith Primary Schools, has resulted in strengthened skills of teachers to moderate and formulate more robust professional judgments. The small schools of the ASG meet together for both teacher dialogue and for pupil social interactions. Staff in St Thomas' have committed to continuing this liaison despite the absence of a Headteacher this term. They also work together wherever possible for planning a cohesive and engaging curriculum. There is a willingness to improve and to do what is necessary to meet the needs of all pupils. At time of visit, Curriculum Rationale was under development. Continued development should be undertaken in line with any review of school vision and values which may be undertaken by the incoming Headteacher. This would include further work on curriculum progressions across all curriculum areas.

Health and Wellbeing is a central focus and the school use the shared values and vision for behaviour, socialisation and motivation. As a result, the majority of children are ready for learning and are responsible and articulate about their own wellbeing. Those needing support are given timely and appropriate nurturing. Children use the Wellbeing indicators (SHANARRI), and report that they are working on those things they find more challenging.

Numeracy and Literacy are a primary focus of daily lessons. Teachers group pupils for most of the core lessons with a number of lessons reliant on worksheets and generic resources. The majority of pupils are independent in their approaches to these with a few children requiring the support of staff, including the teacher, to access the content. Numeracy and Literacy progressions are used in the planning of lessons and are beginning to be utilised in feedback and learner dialogue.

Outside areas are developing in a range of ways including introduction of loose parts for play and in the Nursery Courtyard, more natural materials and imaginative play stimuli. The majority of Nursery pupils spoke with confidence, articulating the purpose of their play and learning activities.

The curriculum in St Thomas' is contextually relevant. More could be done to make local links explicit, such as with the Interdisciplinary Learning (IDL) focus areas. The school is within the town centre of Keith and the local community of shops, including a Tesco superstore provide good learning opportunities. Further focus on Developing the Young Workforce through wider skills development and natural links made to Career Education Standards would strengthen this further. Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Creativity and the Careers Education Standards are evident in some areas of the curriculum and some pupils were able to articulate their learning in terms of future applications to the world of work.

Two-and-a-half hours of Religious Instruction are required under the direction of the Catholic Church for the denominational designation of the school. This is met in a number of ways in class and through whole school activities. Weekly Mass and follow-up work is in place and the liturgical calendar of holy days features strongly with class work reflecting ecclesiastic priorities. Parishioners are involved in the life of the school, in particular the priests, sisters from the Elgin convent and those attending Mass with the children. One of the teachers has completed the Catholic training certificate and shares resources with the others. A supply teacher covering McCrone times supports the RE entitlement across the older classes. The parish representative for the school is currently training to teach and has been contributing to Religious Education curriculum development this year.

The curriculum is further supported by a number of additional visitors to the school such as the Mandarin teacher and the choirmaster from the diocese of Aberdeen. Any review of Curriculum Rationale now needs to define a clarity in purpose and choice of external supports, offsite visits and community partnerships against targeted outcomes, including links to the Career Education Standard and other relevant educational priorities.

## 1.5 Learning & Teaching

During our time at St Thomas RC Primary School, a full programme of classroom visits was undertaken, each class visited at least twice during our visit. Learning and teaching activities were observed, classwork and jotter work were reviewed and learners engaged in conversations about their learning. This included dialogue in class and through focus group discussions.

St Thomas RC Primary School has a positive environment and ethos for learning, with almost all children exhibiting rights respecting behaviours. Across classes, there are mutually positive relationships amongst pupils and with pupils and staff, with few instances of low level misbehaviour handled

swiftly and sensitively by staff in a solutions orientated and restorative manner during our visit.

Teachers across classes work well to plan together a range of learning activities, involving support staff and volunteers as appropriate in lessons. This includes focused work on targeted interventions in support of learning using “Talk Boost” in support of precision teaching of core language skills for identified pupils, “5-minute boxes” for Literacy and Numeracy boosting, writing groups, Emerging Literacy and support with differentiation for all learners. As part of professional development activities, one practitioner is undertaking SEAL (Stages of Early Arithmetical) training in support of diagnostic testing of learners for Numeracy intervention.

Across classes, most children understand the purpose of their learning, the majority of children accessing learning at a level appropriate to them. Some lessons were further linked to the community and the world of work. Learning Intentions and Success Criteria were evident in most lessons observed, shared in a variety of ways including verbally, supported by interactive board and whiteboards. Co-creation of Success Criteria was evident in the majority of lessons visited. Further differentiation of Success Criteria may have supported individuals and groups further, ensuring learning was at an appropriate pace for all. Teachers spoke of the developing reporting system and this will generate greater dialogue with learners and reflection across all stages on their achievements, next steps and awareness of themselves as learners.

On questioning learners across lessons visited, most learners understood the purpose of their learning (the “what”) with the majority also understanding “why” they were learning certain topics and content. Teacher creativity was evident in the delivery of a range of lessons. As a result, most children were seen to be confident, engaged and curious during their interactions with teachers. Teachers should now build on this by reflecting on the level of accessibility, engagement and challenge of worksheets, workbooks and textbooks used to supplement this learning. Teachers across classes circulated well in support of individuals and groups, checking for understanding and progress in learning. Further extending questioning to more open questioning and integration of more assessment for learning approaches will increase challenge for all.

The children benefited from a range of learning approaches; on the day of the visit the teacher in P6-7 was using props to run a mental maths game based on the popular TV show *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* The children were motivated and engaged with this learning. In the main numeracy lesson the teacher rotated her attention by groups to give direct input based on ability, and included an outdoor plenary to add interest and consolidate learning. There is scope to build on this with varied resources for the written/recording elements of learning. In P1-3 the “Farm to Fork” project involving offsite visits to a farm and a supermarket was used as an Interdisciplinary Learning opportunity and made good use of the developing vocabulary for writing and reading lessons. Further links to the Career Education Standard would be

appropriate, with learners keen to speak about the world of work and the many pathways open to them in the future.

The multi-composite nature of classes has been organised into carousel type activities which are divided by a combination of age-expected and ability outcomes. Teachers now need to ensure that the independent work sufficiently challenges all abilities including the most able, and is fully accessible to those who are unsupported, differentiating accordingly. Revisiting learning and teaching approaches as a staff will strengthen learner leadership and ownership of learning. Developing a shared language of learning will support learner reflection and feedback, ensuring consistency in approach for raising attainment.

#### 1.6 School buildings

Condition: standard C (2017)

Suitability: standard B (2017)

St Thomas RC Primary School and Nursery is a denominational school located in the Cuthil area of Keith adjacent to St Thomas' RC Church. School catchment area is in line with parish boundary due to denominational status with almost 14% of school roll living in surrounding areas.

Current school accommodation is organised into the following year groups: Primary 1/2/3 class, Primary 3/4/5 class and Primary 6/7 class, where three multi-stage composite classes are formed for the 63 pupils of St Thomas RC Primary School. A Nursery class is also located within the school building, accommodating 20 pupils in morning nursery. The school has a Courtyard area ("Quad Garden") used for outdoor learning predominantly by the Nursery class with a range of learning resources supporting free flow play from the Nursery. Alongside administration offices (2), Staff Room (1), School Kitchen, small school Library, Storage areas (8) and WC facilities (6), the school has a multi-purpose Hall used for Physical Education and Physical Activity, Assemblies, Canteen and Expressive Arts activities including Music. Externally, the school has two playground areas and grassed playing fields to the rear in addition to a small play area for Nursery and P1-P3 pupils.

#### 1.7 Pastoral Care

There is a very positive, welcoming ethos in the school. Through in class and focus group discussions, most pupils feel supported by all school staff and know who to go to if they have a problem or worry. A positive culture of support and pastoral care was evident across the school. Pupils are positive regarding most aspects of the school with a sense of pride and belonging. The school community as a whole has a strong sense of equity and equality for all pupils, evidenced through shared school vision and values. All staff demonstrate a caring and positive attitude towards pupils where their support and encouragement is welcomed and valued by pupils and their families.

The Support for Learning teacher is driving forward with the GIRFEC agenda and ensuring equity and inclusion during the term without a Headteacher. This has ensured that pupils maintain their high standards of behaviour for learning. Parents speak highly of staff in the school and believe the school is a safe, warm and nurturing environment for all children.

Child protection arrangements within in the school are sufficiently robust and secure, and multi-agency work is effective in supporting vulnerable families. Training is routine and thorough and safeguarding is a priority of all staff. Health and Wellbeing needs of all are met, including those more vulnerable pupils through a range of groups as stated previously (“Munch Club”, “Library Lunch” and “Quines Club”).

#### 1.8 Attendance, exclusions & pupil behaviour

Attendance rate: 92.99% (Moray Primary School average: 94.9%)

Violence/Aggression against staff: 1 incident was recorded (2017/2018)

There were no incidents of exclusion (2017/18)

St Thomas RC Primary School vision and values are underpinned by the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland. Key characteristics of this charter included focus on inclusive ethos, promotion of respect for different beliefs and cultures (including inter-faith dialogue) and provision of religious education programmes enabling young people to develop their understanding of Gospel values and of how to apply them to life. School vision focuses on providing all pupils with keys to belonging, learning and success throughout their learning journey with “kind”, “forgiving”, “honest and sincere”, “successful”, “creative”, “happy” and “be the best...anyway” identified as core school values. This is in support of all learners developing in the Curriculum four capacities: Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors. Parents and carers are very much identified as partners in their child’s education and the health, happiness and progress of all children.

The school Positive Behaviour Management Policy focuses on three non-negotiable rights: the right to learn, the right to respect and the right to safety for all in the school. Positive incentives and consequences form the basis for this policy. The school also advocates Restorative Practices where children are asked to make good choices for themselves and towards others. When wrong choices are made by children with regards to behaviour, they are supported using restorative approaches, aiming to encourage effective conflict resolution and maintain positive relationships. This is through a very fair and empathetic process, asking children to reflect on other people’s view and feelings, take responsibility for own actions and impact on others and move forwards in a positive way. Any issues surrounding behaviour are currently notified to home via a Home/School Diary or verbally from teachers.

Persistent misbehaviour may be communicated by the Headteacher or Class Teacher at this time, with parents invited in as appropriate for a Solution Orientated Meeting to discuss the way forward.

Parents through Focus Group discussions speak very positively of school and staff, including “open door” nature of school, nurturing school environment and friendly atmosphere with few instances of behaviour issues. Consideration of working towards the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award would help the school to focus in on School Charters for Children’s Rights and respecting the rights of others, including developing pupil leadership through this initiative. This would further support enhanced pupil participation in school, with pupils keen to extend meaningful pupil leadership opportunities.

## **2. School roll**

### **2.1 Roll and roll forecast**

The School Roll in 2018 (Pupil Census) is 63 pupils. Since 2013 the roll has risen from 44 pupils.

Forecasted roll: 2025 – 63

School roll is anticipated to remain static over the next 6 years

### **2.2 Inward placing requests**

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 11, 2015/16: 10, 2016/17: 10, 2017/18: 8, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 9 inward placing requests

### **2.3 Outward placing requests**

Net placings over last 5 years: 2014/15: 0, 2015/16: 0, 2016/17: 0, 2017/18: 0, 2018/2019 (Year to date): 0 outward placing requests

### **2.4 Roll as percentage of capacity**

2018 School Roll: 63; Functional Capacity: 75 = 84%

2018 School Roll: 63; Maximum Capacity: 99 = 64%

### **2.5 Class composition**

2018-19: 3 classes: 3 multi-stage composites

(Classes: Composite: P1/2/3, P3/4/5, P6/7)

### **2.6 Number of teachers**

2018 – 5.12 fte Teachers – 7 Staff

1.0 fte Headteacher and 4.12 fte Teachers including 1 Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT)

### **2.7 School roll**

2018 School Roll: 61; Current 2019 School roll: 63

## **3. Financial position**

### **3.1 Budgeted running cost**

The cost per pupil in 2018/2019 (based on current roll: 63) is £3,761.

### 3.2 Financial trends

School devolved budget (including carry forward) for 2017-18 had a 0.82% underspend. This is within scheme rules of 2.5%.

### 3.3 Financial plans

At time of visit, there was no substantive Headteacher in post. Prior to visit, the substantive Headteacher used devolved budget effectively for whole school developments, linked in with school self-evaluation evidence and School Improvement Plan priorities identified. This included focused purchase of learning resources for raising attainment and use of PEF funding for targeted staffing and other resources, part of which used to fund a Family Support Worker and Pupil Support Assistant along with other schools in the Keith ASG.

## 4. **Staff Wellbeing and Development**

### 4.1 Availability of Teachers

St Thomas RC Primary School is fully staffed at this time, a substantive Headteacher having been appointed to post. St Thomas' is a 3 teacher Primary School with a Headteacher who oversees both Strategic and Operational leadership of the school whilst also having a teaching commitment. This session, the school also has an NQT with additional cover provided by a part-time member of teaching staff for NQT 0.2 fte out of class. McCrone cover (Physical Education) is further provided by a Primary specialist 0.1 fte). The Nursery (morning only) is staffed by a Senior Nursery Nurse and a Nursery Nurse, supported by a Pupil Support Assistant (Nursery). A part-time Support for Learning Teacher (0.8 fte) provides additional targeted and universal support for identified children. A team of 5 Classroom Assistants/Pupil Support Assistants provide in-class and group support for identified children (1 Pupil Support Assistant funded through PEF).

### 4.2 Headteacher Relief Time

The Headteacher is the sole member of Senior Leadership at St Thomas RC Primary School. The Headteacher in such instance works in collaboration with all staff, working collegiately in support of all learners. This session as with last, the school has a Newly Qualified Teacher joining the St Thomas RC Primary School staff team, providing additional Headteacher non-contact time.

### 4.3 Leadership Capacity

At time of visit, there was no Headteacher (substantive) in post due to appointment of previous Headteacher to another post in another school. A new Headteacher (substantive) has since been appointed. Staff and parents spoke positively of the leadership offered by the previous Headteacher in driving school improvement and look forward to the new Headteacher starting, post-Easter. Pupils look forward to wider leadership opportunities restarting including Pupil Council and Clubs/Committees,

offering potential for wider achievements. Staff have worked together well as a team, empowered and active in ensuring that the school continued to move forwards in absence of a substantive Headteacher.

#### 4.4 Staff Development and Leadership of Improvement of Change

Staff work as a strong team – as evidenced through recent collegiate working in absence of a substantive Headteacher – with strong desire to learn and develop together, improving outcomes for learners. Through cross-stage planning meetings, staff meetings and collegiate times, staff have continued to move forwards with key SIP priorities including Curriculum Design/Rationale, Nurture and HWB, Raising Attainment through learning and teaching, and approaches to Religious Education in Catholic Schools (RERC) and faith development. Moderation activities further continue as an ASG along with informal discussions among staff for intervention in support of all children. Staff are also part of a rural primary schools TLC (Teacher Learning Community) supporting all teachers to continue to develop all skills in learning and teaching to ensure pupil learning experiences are as strong as possible.

Staff are keen to lead on different areas and look forwards to working with the new Headteacher on leading further forwards, viewing themselves as a strong team, willing to learn and further improve. Morale has remained high with staff supporting one another as “one big family” as stated on a number of occasions throughout the visit. Further development of pupil leadership opportunities will allow for greater ownership of change, particularly in respect of school improvement pupil groups and wider achievement options.

Parents speak highly of staff and trust staff within the school, viewing the school as a community and staff committed to putting in place positive changes to benefit their children.

### 5. Schools Accessibility

#### 5.1 Home to school transport time

The majority of pupils (54; 86%) are from within parish catchment. Less than half of pupils (9; 14%) originate from outwith catchment. Most children in this latter category it is anticipated, travel for less than 30 minutes.

#### 5.2 Distance to another suitable school

Nearest school to St Thomas RC Primary School is identified as Keith Primary School (0.8 miles; 4 minutes approximate travel via local town roads, crossing A96 onto A95).

#### 5.3 Existing co-operative arrangements with other schools and further education colleges/training organisations

Co-operative working arrangements as common with other smaller Primary Schools exist among the ASG. This includes Moderation activities underway, pupil social events and sporting activities. Arrangements for P7-S1 transition and enhanced transitions for identified ASN pupils are in place with Keith Grammar School (0.4 miles; 4 minutes approximate travel via local roads, crossing A96 onto A95). The school also supports students as appropriate through teacher training placements from Moray College UHI and Aberdeen University.

## **6. Strong Links with the Community**

### **6.1 Parents' Views**

Through focus group discussion, parents are very pleased with the school and welcome the availability and approachability of class and SfL teachers. Parents view the school as a very open and friendly environment for learning, with real focus on wellbeing and nurture of all children. Parents do not feel there are pupil behaviour issues and favour the composite class nature of the school, seeing this as key to breaking down barriers across stages and mixing of their children, socially and educationally (not restricted by stage). Parents look forward to welcoming their new Headteacher to St Thomas RC Primary School.

### **6.2 Degree and Quality of Parental Involvement**

The school has an active Parent Council, working together with the school on fundraising activities including Christmas Hamper fundraiser and Coffee Morning, social evening planning for families and presentations on key school improvement items including Growth Mindset and learning.

Parents are invited to join with the school through a range of events including "Meet and Greet", Parents' Evening, sacraments, 'stay and play', Prizegiving and parent helpers. As part of wider parental engagement in partnership with council catering department, families were invited to join their children following a Summer Cookery class – "Bake my world a better place" – taking place during the first week of Summer 2018 holidays. Pupils learned new skills, gained insight into where food comes from (industry visits) with support during this week to families of 25 children.

Through focus group discussions, parents value opportunities to visit the school. Parents would welcome more shared learning events and open afternoons. Additional family learning resources or packs in support of their child's homework and learning would also be welcomed (for example, support strategies for Numeracy and Maths for consistency with school based methods). Parents also valued Learning Logs for capturing key learning for later discussion at home, supporting home learning.

### **6.3 Contribution of the school to the Community**

St Thomas RC Primary School is a key part of the local community, with children forming friendships across stages due to the composite class nature of the school. Close links are formed with St Thomas RC Church, school chaplains and parish with families welcomed from other faith communities and cultures. The school works closely with other smaller ASG Primary Schools and in support of pupil transition to Keith Grammar School. The school is committed to providing an inclusive ethos with high expectations set for all learners.

#### 6.4 Other Provision (e.g. Nursery)

The school also incorporates its own Nursery class (currently 20 Nursery children in half-day morning session).

#### 6.5 Multi-function use of building

The school building is in good decorative order and state of repair. Due to the restricted general purpose spaces available, use is made of the Nursery in the afternoons for intervention groups and one-to-one support of identified children. This is more difficult in the mornings where space is at a premium, particularly when the hall and library are in use.

In Moray, Primary Schools are not currently let for community groups and activities. No informal arrangements for school building use are currently in place.

#### 6.6 Capacity in nearest schools

##### Keith Primary School

2018 School Roll: 323; Functional Capacity: 462 = 70%

2018 School Roll: 323; Maximum Capacity: 482 = 67%

### **Conclusions**

St Thomas RC Primary School continues to offer pupils a range of curricular experiences supported by a hard working team of dedicated teachers and support staff in a supportive and inclusive school environment. Staff are reflective practitioners, working together to meet a school population with a range of learning needs.

It is noted that overall, on the basis of the evaluations of criteria 1-6, St Thomas RC Primary School and Nursery is a sustainable school. School roll since 2013 has increased from 44 pupils to 63 pupils in 2018. It is noted that the roll and enrolment forecasts indicate that the school will remain below the minimum roll threshold for a primary school in a rural area (below 145 pupils, 90 pupils in a rural area per section 6.7, "Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools", 2016; Annex B – Rural Schools list). While classed as a denominational school, St Thomas RC Primary School remains below a minimum recommendation of four classes formed with more than two stages within two of the three composite classes formed (per section 6.7, "Schools for the Future: A Policy for Sustainable Schools", 2016).

Roll prediction indicates stability in roll over the next 7 years. With current functional capacity (84%) and maximum capacity (64%) alongside sustained school roll (63 pupils) anticipated, St Thomas RC Primary School has future capacity to receive additional pupils, including non-denominational pupils as it currently does.

### **Recommendations**

A denominational school, St Thomas RC Primary School covers the semi-rural town of Keith and surrounding district. School catchment area is in line with the parish boundary, with almost 14% of school roll living in the area surrounding Keith.

School roll projections would suggest sufficient capacity in future years to meet the needs of the school catchment where the following options could be considered and appraised:

- Consider 3- 18 campus leadership model with a denominational wing.
- Consider merger with Keith Primary School, ensuring the provision of denominational education.
- Retain St Thomas' Primary School as per existing arrangement.

### **Strengths**

- The very nurturing and positive school ethos, welcoming of a diverse range of learners and individual learning needs
- Children who are positive in their outlook and rights respecting, relating positively to one another, staff, the wider parish and partners
- A very conscientious and dedicated staff team, committed to working together in order to ensure learners are listened to and cared for
- The range of developing interventions in support of identified pupils across the school and their learning

### **Areas for Improvement**

- As part of any future review of school vision and values, continue collaborative review of the Curriculum Rationale in order to reflect the unique school context and Curriculum for Excellence design principles.
- Review approach to curriculum planning and progressions, ensuring sufficient pace, challenge and differentiation for all learners in planned learning experiences and inter-disciplinary learning.
- Working collegiately, revisit learning and teaching approaches as a staff for learner leadership and ownership of learning, developing a shared language of learning for consistency in approach and raised attainment.
- Review and extend current opportunities for pupil participation and wider achievement.