

ITEM No ...6.....

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 27 APRIL 2022

REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) RETURN VISITS – CAMPERDOWN, CLEPINGTON, ROWANTREE & SIDLAW VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS, CRAIGIE HIGH SCHOOL & ROCKWELL LEARNING CENTRE

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 124-2022

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) return visits to Rowantree, Sidlaw View, Camperdown and Clepington Primary Schools, Craigie High School and Rockwell Learning Centre.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- i) notes the contents of this report; and
- ii) instructs the Chief Education Officer to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Education Scotland undertook return visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education (HMI) in relation to previous inspections and continuing engagement during November and December 2021. They published reports of their findings during December, January and February of 2022. At the time of the inspection the following numbers of children were on each school roll:

- Rowantree Primary School 321
- Sidlaw View Primary School 196
- Camperdown Primary School 242
- Clepington Primary School 424
- Craigie High School 620
- Rockwell Learning Centre 31.

4.2 All six schools' School Improvement Plans 2019/20 - 2021/22 included a focus on the identified areas for improvement from the original inspections. These were regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement procedures. Schools have also been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing plans to support recovery. The attached appendices provide the letters published by Education Scotland in relation to these return visits.

Rowantree Primary School

4.3 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since 2017. The majority of pupils attending the school reside within SIMD deciles 1 and 2 with around 82% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals. The school's provision is enhanced to support a range of pupils requiring additional support for their learning.

4.4 **Action points from previous visit:**

- Provide strong and sustained leadership to take forward significant improvements across the school to help children make the best possible progress.
- Ensure consistently high-quality learning experiences, including involving children in planning and reflecting on their own learning in order to improve attainment.
- Improve the school's approaches to assessment, tracking and monitoring to ensure there are clear processes in place which are used by staff to track, review and enhance children's progress in learning.
- Considerably improve arrangements for identifying and meeting children's learning needs.
- Develop clear and flexible progression pathways to support the planning and delivery of all curriculum areas from nursery through to P7, building on prior learning.

4..5 **Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19**

- Rowantree Primary School is responding well to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The headteacher and staff have been working well to connect with families, especially those reluctant to attend school. Staff and parents have a deeper appreciation of their partnership and the school are now better placed to respond to the needs of its community.
- Staffing is deployed well across the school, maintaining consistently positive relationships and high-quality learning experiences
- Children feel safe in their learning spaces and staff report an improvement in children's behaviour and attitude to school.
- The headteacher and staff have a very strong focus on health and wellbeing and children speak with confidence about health and wellbeing and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Parents feel better informed about their children's weekly learning through the use of the newsletter and digital media. Teachers are approachable and keen to help parents support their children's progress.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

- Senior leaders have developed a consistent and sustained approach to leadership at all levels.
- Senior leaders now observe lessons regularly and Staff participate in peer observations. Feedback is given to colleagues on strengths and areas for improvement.
- The leadership team are now recording improved attainment data from across the school.
- Children speak confidently about their learning and teachers use questions well to further children's understanding.
- The headteacher and staff have robust and detailed tracking and monitoring systems in place to support children's learning and progress and should consider further approaches to enable children overcome gaps in their learning as a result of COVID-19.
- The headteacher and staff have well-developed systems in place for identifying and planning support for children with a wide range of additional support needs and will continue to develop plans for targeted and specialist training for staff.
- Senior leaders are making significant progress with children attending enhanced provision classes and participating in activities with their peers.
- Staff now make good use of local authority progression pathways in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.
- Staff should develop further professional development opportunities within moderation and assessment, increasing confidence of teacher judgement.
- The headteacher consults with all staff, children, parents and partners to plan a curriculum matching the unique context of their school community.

Sidlaw View Primary School

4.6 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since 2019. The majority of pupils attending the school reside within SIMD deciles 1 and 2 with around 81% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals.

4.7 Action points from previous visit:

- Senior leaders need to demonstrate stronger leadership which prioritise areas of school improvement in a well-judged and focussed way. They also need to raise expectations and aspirations amongst staff and children throughout the school.
- All staff need to work together more effectively to ensure that learning, teaching and assessment is of a consistently high quality to raise attainment.
- Develop the curriculum to ensure that children can build on their learning as they move through the school and have relevant motivating experiences.
- As a matter of priority ensure that all children's needs are met. Staff should now develop approaches to wellbeing, inclusion and equality.

4.8 Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

- Senior and middle leaders and staff continue to support children and their families very well at Sidlaw View Primary School. They offer a high level of care, and promote and nurture positive and respectful relationships across the school community.
- COVID-19 did not lessen the commitment of all staff to ensuring children's wellbeing. Staff cared for and nurtured children and their families very well through the lockdown periods.
- Staff were proactive in contacting children and their families regularly, especially the most vulnerable, and children and their families could contact staff members whenever they wished.
- Parents spoke very highly of how staff communicated with them during the lockdowns.
- After the first lockdown, COVID-19 did affect negatively children's reading at P1. To address this, staff helped parents to access a virtual hub, which allowed children to carry on reading with a virtual teacher.
- After the lockdowns, the headteacher also identified a gap in children's learning and progress in literacy at P6 and P7. To address this gap, staff continue to provide increased, focused daily literacy work, including more regular assessment and target setting.
- COVID-19 has also affected a few planned areas of school improvement, such as the development of the school curriculum. Whilst considerable development work took place in this area, staff were unable to progress the work at the pace they intended.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

- Senior and middle leaders are demonstrating much stronger leadership, which prioritises areas of school improvement very well. They are also continuing very successfully to raise the expectations and aspirations of staff and children.
- All staff and children have worked hard to align more closely the clear vision, values, and aims, and embedding them well into the life of the school.
- Teaching and support staff demonstrate increased confidence in their work. All staff have led and participated in a range of professional learning, most of which links specifically to the school improvement plan.
- Senior and middle leaders are working well with a range of partners to support children. Partners speak very highly of the school, especially in relation to how staff communicate with them and enable them to participate in joint planning.
- All staff are working very well to ensure that learning, teaching and assessment is of a consistently high quality to raise attainment.
- Staff are engaging positively and successfully in work to raise children's attainment, especially in literacy.
- Senior and middle leaders and staff continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that children can build on their learning as they move through the school and have relevant motivating experiences.
- Widespread consultations have taken place with children, staff and parents to find out the range of contexts they wish to be included in the curriculum.

- Staff are continuing to engage in curriculum development work with colleagues from neighbouring schools and national partners.
- Senior and middle leaders and staff are meeting children's needs very well, and are continuing to develop the school's approaches to improving wellbeing, inclusion and equality.
- All teachers regularly monitor children's wellbeing in classes and demonstrate increased clarity about the needs of individual children.

Camperdown Primary School

4.9 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since 2017. The majority of pupils attending the school reside within SIMD deciles 1 and 2 with around 47% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals. The school's provision is enhanced to support a range of pupils requiring additional support for their learning.

4.10 Action points from previous visit:

- The Senior Leadership Team should work with the staff team to ensure consistently high quality learning and teaching and appropriate levels of pace and challenge in lessons at all stages.
- Staff should further develop a shared understanding of standards, expectations and levels of attainment and achievement for Camperdown Primary School.

4.11 Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Health and Wellbeing

- the school campus became a community hub during the first lockdown with children from five schools accessing the school's facilities. Children attending the hub adapted well – particularly positive experience for P7 pupils who made friends within cluster which helped transition
- throughout the pandemic the school continued to build on the nurturing practice identified as a strength in the original inspection
- pastoral, practical and more specialist support was provided. For some families, this experience transformed their relationship with the school to one that was much more positive and constructive
- a bespoke school app was created to support staff wellbeing, enabling staff to connect in different ways

Learning & Teaching

- staff used their reflections and feedback from parents on the first lockdown to inform and improve their approach to remote learning during the second lockdown
- the introduction of staff trio groups enabled colleagues to support each other and manage the simultaneous demands of face-to-face teaching and remote learning
- staff confidence in delivering remote learning increased and children's progress was tracked more robustly
- children's engagement with remote learning was closely monitored, enabling the school to respond quickly to the needs of families

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

- review of positive relationships policy has resulted in a shift in the culture within the school, ensuring the school's vision and values and nurture principles are reflected within both policy and practice.
- leadership opportunities for children have increased.
- meaningful professional learning activities have provided:
 - shared understanding of standards
 - more consistent approaches to learning and teaching

- effective partnership working with local, national and academic organisations leading to improved outcomes for children.
 - all teachers are more empowered to lead on aspects of school improvement through the introduction of a range of coordinator roles
 - staff are increasingly involved in undertaking their own research when driving forward aspects of improvement.
- newly introduced 'Learning and Teaching Standard' is supporting the school and ELC setting.
 - curriculum progression frameworks and national guidance better used to support teachers to make more informed professional judgements about children's progress in learning.
 - planning and assessment – improved approaches, particularly in writing, are supporting teachers to build on prior learning more consistently.
 - class tracking profile - is enabling teachers to monitor children's progress more effectively. As a result, children's individual needs are being better met.

Clelington Primary School

4.12 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since June 2021. The majority of pupils attending the school reside within SIMD deciles 1 and 2 with around 43% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals. The school's provision is enhanced to support a range of pupils requiring additional support for their learning.

4.13 Action points from previous visit:

- Develop strong and consistent strategic leadership of change, underpinned by effective self-evaluation, to monitor closely the impact of the school's work on outcomes for children and to plan for future improvements
- Improve the quality and consistency of learning and teaching and assessment. Ensure pace and challenge across learning is set at the right level to meet the needs of all learners, enabling children to attain as highly as possible
- Further develop the school's approaches to ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion. In doing so, ensure a focus on promoting positive behaviour, respect and aspiration.
- The headteacher and staff should develop further the ways in which they track, and monitor children's progress to support robust and rigorous approaches to raising attainment in literacy and numeracy

4.14 Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

- The primary focus for senior leaders and staff throughout the experience of the pandemic has been the wellbeing of all across the school. Parents and children are appreciative of the effort made by all staff to support wellbeing.
- When children returned to school buildings for the first time, they returned to the same classes with the same teachers wherever possible. This ensured children, many of whom have faced challenge and loss, experienced continuity and stability to support them back into school life.
- During the first period of remote learning, the school worked in partnership with other local schools, focusing on delivering health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy.
- Staff across all the partner schools worked in the hub which was established in a nearby school. To provide access to learning, the school provided learning packs, digital devices and resources which could be collected in local partner supermarkets.
- Staff expressed concern that these interruptions had a negative impact on children's motivation to learn, especially towards the end of the school session 2020/21. Upon taking up post in 2021, the acting headteacher conducted a survey with children to ask them what would help them feel more engaged in their learning. As a result, the school increased further the emphasis on learning outdoors, supported by partners including Dundee United Football Club.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

- The headteacher, acting headteacher, senior leaders and staff have made considerable progress towards addressing the areas for improvement outlined in the original inspection report, despite the many challenges of the pandemic.

- The headteacher has ensured that both short and long term planning focus on the values at the core of the school community. These include raising attainment through high-quality learning and teaching and leadership.
- The acting headteacher has continued this successful approach through a shared vision of positive change. This has resulted in children and staff feeling empowered to lead change across the school.
- The teacher learning communities in particular are a powerful driver of positive and wide ranging change in the school. Through this approach, all staff have engaged in professional learning which has had a direct impact on improving children's learning.
- The impact of this research-driven approach to improving learning and teaching is evident in improved attainment in reading and writing. Data also shows that there has been an increase in the number of children engaged in their learning.
- Senior leaders are committed to building relationships across the school community with a focus on consistency of approach for all. Wellbeing is placed at the heart of the curriculum.
- There is an emphasis on creating a calm, listening community with core expectations of everyone to 'be ready, be respectful and be safe'.

Craigie High School

4.15 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since 2016. The majority of pupils attending the school reside within SIMD deciles 1 to 3 with around 39% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals. The school's provision is enhanced to support a range of pupils requiring additional support for their learning and the school currently has 5 enhanced support areas.

4.16 Action points from previous visit:

- Improve the consistency of effective leadership at all levels. This will support the development of high standards and expectations of the engagement, achievement and attainment of all learners.
- Develop a shared understanding across all staff of what high-quality learning, teaching and assessment can look like. Ensure that this is effectively applied to improve young people's experiences.
- Improve attainment and achievement across all stages. Continue to develop approaches to monitoring and tracking to ensure all young people make the best possible progress in their learning.
- Continue to develop an inclusive, nurturing ethos in all areas the school so that the wellbeing and learning needs of every young person are met.
- Review and improve the curriculum to ensure all young people experience appropriate pace, challenge and progression through all stages of learning.

4.17 Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

- COVID-19 has prevented staff from taking forward some planned improvements such as work with partners to support improvements to the curriculum.
- The Pandemic has provided the opportunity for staff to understand better how to make improvements to the learning experiences for young people and to identify and address gaps in learning.
- Staff worked quickly to develop their skills in digital learning approaches to deliver learning for young people which has had a positive impact and helping mitigate some effects of staff and young people's absences.
- Staff also conducted surveys which focussed on the wellbeing of young people throughout periods of national lockdown, resultantly Guidance staff adapted the personal and social education programme to better support young people and individualised support

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

- The headteacher has led the senior leadership team with commendable commitment, integrity and energy to inspire positive change in the culture of Craigie High School.
- Staff now use evidence well to inform improvements.
- Young people have a greater voice in their school using the 'Have your say' approach.

- Teachers now have more effective conversations with young people about their learning, especially in the senior phase.
- Staff now have a clearer focus on the skills young people need to develop to be successful.
- Teachers have increased the number of courses and learning opportunities available for young people.
- Teachers now need to ensure that all young people learn at an appropriate pace and level so that can achieve at the highest level possible.
- Senior leaders to continue to check young people's progress regularly and encourage teachers to increase their expectations of what learner success can look like.

Rockwell Learning Centre

4.18 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post since 2016. Rockwell Learning Centre provides support for up to 45 secondary school-aged young people who struggle to engage full-time in mainstream. The support offered can be on a part-time, shared placement with the mainstream school or full-time depending upon age, stage and need.

4.19 Action points from previous visit:

- The SMT need to provide a clearer direction for school improvement. This should include more leadership opportunities for young people and staff.
- Ensure more consistent, high quality, learning and teaching across the school. Increase the expectations of what young people can achieve.
- Develop the curriculum in line with national guidance.
- Improve the quality of individualised planning, assessment and tracking of young people's progress.

4.20 Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

During the first period of school closure in April 2020 school staff provided pastoral support to learners and families.

- By June 2020 senior leaders identified the need for learners to access support in school. In agreement with the local authority young people safely accessed school for short periods of time across the week.
- In January 2021 the school did not close and pupils were able to access learning across the week. This led to improved learner engagement.
- Staff worked hard to improve the culture and ethos. They provided bespoke individualised plans. This supported young people to feel safe and overcome anxieties about re-engaging with their learning.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

- The headteacher, supported by the depute headteacher, has taken positive steps to improve approaches to self-evaluation and is continuing to enhance improvement planning throughout the academic year, using data and other information gathered through the self-evaluation exercises.
- Senior leaders and teachers have worked well to gather and use a range of meaningful data to strengthen their understanding of the progress young people are making. They are able to identify what is working well and where progress is limited.
- Supported by child protection coordinators across the school, sound progress has been made in ensuring safeguarding and child protection processes are understood by all staff. With the exception of high levels of absence, all safeguarding areas identified from the original inspection have been systematically improved. The depute headteacher and support staff continue to work with young people and families to identify ways of improving participation and attendance.
- Teachers, by participating in well-planned moderation activity, contribute positively to the development of curriculum.
- Staff are leading key areas within the school improvement plan.
- A majority of young people engage in valuable activities designed to improve skills in leadership, cooperation and decision making. Examples of such opportunities include a

school fund-raising group, an outdoor learning group and young people working effectively with Fire and Rescue to deliver peer-led fire safety training to primary school pupils.

- Young people are increasing their attainment in the senior phase and engaging better with learning.
- Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop further their strengthened approaches to learning and teaching to provide consistent high-quality practice.
- The school has refreshed its curriculum rationale taking better account of the context of Rockwell Learning Centre and incorporates the views of young people, parents, partners and staff well. As a result, young people have a more varied curriculum offer including more personalisation and choice in the senior phase. This is having a positive impact on young people's engagement with learning, attainment and achievement and staff are continuing to explore partnerships to further enhance the school's curriculum.
- Teachers have improved the quality of individual planning to meet the needs and aspirations of young people.
- At the BGE, tracking of literacy and numeracy is being developed well. All staff contribute to the assessment process.
- The school has introduced effective systems for moderating practice and developing a shared understanding of standards. Teachers are being provided with valuable professional learning and are able to make more accurate judgements about young people's progress across the curriculum.
- Arrangements to support young people through key transitions has improved significantly. Despite the pandemic, young people are being supported well to transition successfully into further education, training or the workplace on leaving school.

4.21 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, visits are made to the school by the school's link Education Officer(s) to monitor the school's progress and improvement in relation to any identified areas for improvement. Staff in all establishments have addressed the recommendations from the original inspections successfully. As a result, Education Scotland will make no more visits in connection with the original inspections and continuing engagement activity. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about each of the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been subject to an assessment of any impact on equality and diversity, fairness, poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Council Management Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None.

Audrey May
Executive Director of Children and Families Service
April 2022



18 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Rowantree Primary School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Rowantree Primary School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families, have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Rowantree Primary School is responding well to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The headteacher and staff have been working well to connect with families, especially those reluctant to attend school. Staff contact families by telephone and make visits, when appropriate, to encourage better attendance. Children are well supported through the use of digital learning resources, particularly those who remain poor school attenders. Children all have access to laptops and good connectivity. The school provides other learning materials, distributing these to children's homes where necessary. The headteacher and staff also play a role in signposting how to access support for other challenges arising from COVID-19. Staff work well to cover for each other's absence and additional staffing, for class cover, is deployed well across the school. Staff and children maintain positive relationships and the high quality learning experiences which have been a consistent feature of the school improvement planning. Staff increased contact with parents has fostered a more positive climate and mutual understanding. Senior leaders, staff and parents have emerged from periods of remote learning with a deeper appreciation of their partnership. Senior leaders in school are now better placed to respond to the needs of the school community.

The headteacher and staff have adopted a very nurturing approach to welcoming children back to school. Staff support strongly the value of these approaches. They support equity and excellence in school and show understanding of children's individual needs. Children feel safe in their learning spaces and staff report an improvement in children's behaviour and attitude to school. 'Soft start' introductions are used to encourage children to come to school and the school bells have been muted to lessen anxiety. The headteacher and staff have a very strong focus on health and wellbeing and recognise this as a school priority. Children speak with confidence about the health and wellbeing programmes and are aware of their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Senior leaders have taken steps to support recovery. Partners are supporting the school well by providing motivating activity sessions to encourage improvements in children's attendance. Teaching staff have established tuition classes for children who feel they may have missed important work through absence during periods of remote learning. Staff are aware of the individual needs of children and address these well through both universal and targeted support. Parents told us they now feel better informed about their children's learning through the use of the newsletter and digital media. These methods of

communication share what children are learning weekly and welcome any questions. Teachers are approachable and keen to help parents support their children's progress

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

Senior leaders have developed a consistent and sustained approach to leadership at all levels. They have empowered staff to lead on identified key areas of curriculum. Curriculum leaders have taken responsibility for leading areas for improvement including literacy, writing, digital numeracy and play pedagogy in early years. Senior leaders now observe lessons regularly and share strengths and areas for improvement with staff. Staff participate in peer observations and feedback to colleagues on strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers have improved their teaching approaches significantly. They are increasing the pace of activities related to raising children's attainment. Children are now challenged at an appropriate level. Tasks are differentiated to take account of different levels of ability. As a result, there is an improving picture of raising attainment. This is supported well by improved pedagogy, the use of peer partner work and feedback through regular observations. There is now a more systematic approach to planning for improvements to help children to make the best possible progress.

The leadership team are now recording improved attainment data from across the school. They have gathered robust information on the progress of all children. Children are involved in planning their lessons. They are offered choices on topics and activities. Children discuss learning intentions with the teacher and each other and co-construct the success criteria for each learning experience. Children speak confidently about their learning and teachers use questions well to further children's understanding.

The headteacher and staff have robust and detailed tracking and monitoring systems in place to support children's learning and progress. There are clear processes in place which are understood and used well by teachers across the school to track and monitor children's progress. Information is shared digitally across the school and staff benefit from having access to one another's planning and assessment data. This data is discussed with staff at planned and regular consultation meetings and forms the basis for interventions made to support individual children's needs. Staff continue with their professional development work on moderation and assessment and are building expertise in their professional judgement and the assessment of a level. Staff have a clear understanding of how accurate assessment informs next steps in learning for children.

The headteacher and staff have well-developed systems in place for identifying and planning support for children with a wide range of additional support needs. Staff and partners respond promptly to the needs and circumstances of children with a range of needs. Staff offer differentiated activities and targeted support in class, nurture groups and clubs and activities, which encourage children to engage positively with school. Parents are now involved actively in supporting target-setting within individual learning plans and attend review meetings regularly. Staff are now well aware of legislation related to additional support needs. Staff recognise that parents and staff would like more support staff in class to help children to overcome gaps in their learning as a result of COVID-19. Senior leaders are making significant progress. This includes children attending the enhanced provision classes and participating in activities with their peers. Vulnerable children receive well-targeted support which is helping them to develop their social skills and giving them the confidence to manage anxiety in situations they may find challenging. As a result, the school has a calm ethos and children feel safe and happy. Senior leaders are supporting teachers well to access professional learning online. Plans are in place to provide more specialist training for staff who support children with more complex needs.

The staff now make good use of local authority progression pathways in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. These pathways support the staff's strategic planning well. This includes the use of National Benchmarks to support staff when they are tracking learning achieved, assessing and reporting to parents. Staff are aware of the children's entitlements and a broad curriculum is planned to meet the needs of all children. Senior leaders consult with staff and plan learning well. The headteacher consults with all staff, children, parents and partners to plan a curriculum matching the unique context of their school community. The headteacher acknowledges that this is being hindered presently by COVID-19 restrictions on parental engagement. There are plans to consult with parents using digital systems. Literacy and numeracy programmes are now embedded in the planning, tracking, monitoring and assessment cycle.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

James McCrory
HM Inspector



18 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Sidlaw View Primary School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Sidlaw View Primary School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Senior and middle leaders and staff continue to support children and their families very well at Sidlaw View Primary School. They offer a high level of care, and promote and nurture positive and respectful relationships across the school community. COVID-19 did not lessen the commitment of all staff to ensuring children's wellbeing. Staff cared for and nurtured children and their families very well through the periods of remote learning. Staff were proactive in contacting children and their families regularly, especially the most vulnerable, and children and their families could contact staff members whenever they wished. Parents spoke very highly of how staff communicated with them during the periods of remote learning. In some instances, COVID-19 had a positive effect on the development of relationships between the school and home. This was noticeable in situations where staff might have had difficulty previously in securing parental engagement.

After the first period of remote learning, COVID-19 had affected negatively children's reading at P1. To address this, staff helped parents to access a virtual hub, which allowed children to carry on reading with a virtual teacher. This helped most children to make good progress, especially during the second period of remote learning. When children returned to in-school learning, the headteacher identified a gap in children's learning and progress in literacy at P6 and P7. To address this gap, staff are continuing to provide increased, focused daily literacy work, including more regular assessment and target setting. After the periods of remote learning, children attending the nurture room found it difficult to return to school and work with a larger group of children. To reduce this difficulty and support children more effectively staff set up a second nurture room. COVID-19 also affected a few planned areas of school improvement, such as the development of the school curriculum. Whilst considerable development work did take place in this area, staff were unable to progress the work at the pace they intended.

COVID-19 continues to have an effect on the school community in terms of pupil and staff absence. Senior and middle leaders are managing this absence well.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

Senior and middle leaders are demonstrating much stronger leadership, which prioritises areas of school improvement very well. They are also continuing very successfully to raise the expectations and aspirations of staff and children. All staff and children have worked hard to align more closely the clear

vision, values, and aims, and they are embedding them well into the life of the school. There is a strong sense of community across the school.

Teaching and support staff demonstrate increased confidence in their work. All staff have led and participated in a range of professional learning, most of which links specifically to the school improvement plan. Staff are also involved in leading national and local authority-led initiatives and coaching programmes. A few staff have also received recognition from the General Teaching Council for Scotland for the high quality of their professional learning.

Senior and middle leaders are working well with a range of partners to support children. Partners speak very highly of the school, especially in relation to how staff communicate with them and enable them to participate in joint planning. They also speak positively of their experiences with children from Sidlaw View Primary School.

All staff are working very well to ensure that learning, teaching and assessment is of a consistently high quality to raise attainment. Improved learning, teaching and assessment is helping children to talk with increased understanding about their learning. Staff are engaging positively and successfully in work to raise children's attainment, especially in literacy. This involves almost all staff assessing children's progress, setting regular targets for and with children, and planning and implementing ways to help children meet their targets.

Senior and middle leaders and staff continue to develop the curriculum to ensure that children can build on their learning as they move through the school and have relevant motivating experiences. Widespread consultations have taken place with children, staff and parents to find out the range of contexts they wish to be included in the curriculum. Children are already benefitting from experiences linked to these contexts, such as work related to the Sidlaw Hills. Staff are continuing to engage in curriculum development work with colleagues from neighbouring schools and national partners.

All staff are meeting children's needs very well, and are continuing to develop the school's approaches to improving wellbeing, inclusion and equality. Teachers regularly monitor children's wellbeing in classes and demonstrate increased clarity about the needs of individual children. Teachers and support staff are also regularly monitoring children's health and wellbeing through individualised plans. These plans outline the range of ways in which the school is supporting children, including work with partners.

The school has met all areas for improvement in relation to safeguarding outlined during the most recent inspection.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant effect on the school community. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality its education service.

Celia McArthur
HM Inspector



14 December 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Camperdown Primary School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried a virtual meeting to Camperdown Primary School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Since the original inspection, the school has experienced significant changes in staffing with seven new staff starting this session. The early learning and childcare (ELC) setting became an 1140 hour provision in August 2020.

The school campus became a community hub during the first lockdown with children from five schools accessing the school's facilities. Children attending the hub adapted well to this new type of provision. It was particularly beneficial to P7 children who established good bonds with their peers from another cluster school. These new friendships strengthened their experience of transition to secondary school.

Staff used their reflections and feedback from parents on the first lockdown to inform and improve their approach to remote learning during the second lockdown. The introduction of staff trio groups enabled colleagues to support each other, share workload and manage the simultaneous demands of face-to-face teaching and remote learning. Staff confidence in delivering remote learning increased and children's progress during this time was tracked more robustly.

Throughout the pandemic, the school continued to build on the nurturing practice identified as a strength in the original inspection. Children's engagement with remote learning was closely monitored, enabling the school to respond quickly to the needs of families. Staff provided pastoral, practical and more specialised support. For some families, this experience transformed their relationship with the school to one that was much more positive and constructive.

A bespoke school app was created to support staff wellbeing, enabling staff to connect in different ways. Its content was designed to meet the specific needs of the Camperdown staff team, ranging from relaxation to providing fun challenges.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

Priorities for improvement continue to reflect the recommendations made at the time of the original inspection and build appropriately on the actions taken to address these since then.

The process of reviewing the school's positive relationships policy resulted in a shift in the culture within the school, ensuring the school's vision and values reflected nurture principles. Leadership opportunities for children have increased.

Staff engage in a range of meaningful professional learning activities to develop a shared understanding of standards. This is resulting in more consistent approaches to learning and teaching. Effective partnership working with local, national and academic organisations strengthens the impact of professional learning on outcomes for children. Although some aspects of partnership projects were affected by the pandemic, staff have worked hard to remain engaged in improving their practice. All teachers are more empowered to lead on aspects of school improvement through the introduction of a range of coordinator roles. Staff are increasingly involved in undertaking their own research when driving forward aspects of improvement.

A sustained focus on the development and implementation of a 'Learning and Teaching Standard' is supporting the school and ELC setting. Teachers are making greater use of curriculum progression frameworks and national guidance. This is supporting them to make more informed professional judgements about children's progress in learning. Improved approaches to planning and assessment, particularly in writing, are supporting teachers to build on prior learning more consistently. The introduction of a class tracking profile is enabling teachers to monitor children's progress more effectively. As a result, children's individual needs are being better met.

As requested, Dundee City Council provided us with a report on the school's progress since January 2019. This report was shared with Education Scotland and is available at [Camperdown Primary School | Dundee City Council](#).

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Pamela Adamson
HM Inspector



1 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Clepington Primary School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a virtual meeting to Clepington Primary School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how children and their families have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support children's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Clepington Primary School is an 'A' listed building that sits in the Stobswell/Maryfield area of Dundee. There is a special unit attached to the school. In June 2021, the acting headteacher took up post following the appointment of the headteacher to a leadership role elsewhere. The senior leadership team also includes a deputy headteacher and two principal teachers.

The primary focus for senior leaders and staff throughout the experience of the pandemic has been the wellbeing of all across the school. Parents and children are appreciative of the effort made by all staff to support wellbeing. They believe staff listen to their views and react appropriately. For example, the headteacher, on the return to school buildings, responded to parental concerns by prioritising planned activities for children to socialise with classmates. Since the reopening of the school building, staff have focused on making sure the school environment feels safe and welcoming to children. When children returned to school buildings for the first time, they returned to the same classes with the same teachers wherever possible. This ensured children, many of whom have faced challenge and loss, experienced continuity and stability to support them back into school life.

During the first period of remote learning, the school worked in partnership with other local schools, focusing on delivering health and wellbeing, literacy and numeracy. Staff across all the partner schools worked in the hub which was established in a nearby school. To provide access to learning, the school provided learning packs, digital devices and resources which could be collected in local partner supermarkets. After the first period of remote learning, teachers focused on building their digital skills. Staff have adopted a commercial digital platform, which supports increased communication and engagement with parents.

There has been a high number of COVID-19 related absences for both children and staff since the return to school buildings following the second period of remote learning. As a result, children's learning has been interrupted through illness or periods of self-isolation. Staff expressed concern that these interruptions had a negative impact on children's motivation to learn, especially towards the end of the school session 2020-21. Upon taking up post in 2021, the acting headteacher conducted a survey with children to ask them what would help them feel more engaged in their learning. As a result, the school

increased further the emphasis on learning outdoors, supported by partners including Dundee United Football Club.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The headteacher, acting headteacher, senior leaders and staff have made considerable progress towards addressing the areas for improvement outlined in the original inspection report, despite the many challenges of the pandemic. The headteacher has ensured that both short and long term planning focus on the values at the core of the school community. These include raising attainment through high-quality learning and teaching and leadership. The acting headteacher has continued this successful approach through a shared vision of positive change. This has resulted in children and staff feeling empowered to lead change across the school. Children contribute effectively in a range of ways, for example as members of the curriculum leaders programme, health and wellbeing group and school improvement groups. Children describe confidently their role in bringing about improvement in their school.

The teacher learning communities in particular are a powerful driver of positive and wide-ranging change in the school. Through this approach, all staff have engaged in professional learning which has had a direct impact on improving children's learning. They are involved increasingly in undertaking their own research when driving forward aspects of improvement. One strong example is the collaborative action research project with the Robert Owen Centre at Glasgow University to improve writing. The impact of this research-driven approach to improving learning and teaching is evident in improved attainment in reading and writing. Data also shows that there has been an increase in the number of children engaged in their learning.

Senior leaders are committed to building relationships across the school community with a focus on consistency of approach for all. Wellbeing is placed at the heart of the curriculum. There is an emphasis on creating a calm, listening community with core expectations of everyone to 'be ready, be respectful and be safe'. There are identified places across the school where children can go if they are looking for help with managing their own behaviour. This consistent approach provides much needed reassurance and support to children, their families and staff. Senior leaders credit this approach with a commendable reduction in exclusion numbers and increased engagement in the learning across the upper school.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Jacqueline Gallagher
HM Inspector

Dundee City Council Children and Families Service

Scrutiny Committee Report Craigie High School letter of visit



8 February 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Craigie High School, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Craigie High School. Our engagement helped us learn more about how young people and their families, have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

Craigie High School has been serving the communities of Craigiebank, Douglas and MidCraigie in the east of Dundee, Scotland for over 45 years. It has a school roll of approximately 620 young people from a wide range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Since the follow-through inspection in October 2019 there have been significant changes to the leadership team, their remits and to the pupil support team.

COVID-19 has prevented staff from taking forward all the planned improvements as they would have wished. For example, they have been unable to work with partners to support improvements to the curriculum. They did however, use the opportunity to help staff to understand better how to make improvements to the learning experiences for young people and to identify and address gaps in learning caused by COVID-19 related absences. Staff worked quickly to develop their skills in using digital approaches to deliver learning for young people. This is continuing to have a positive impact and is helping to mitigate some of the effects of any staff and young people's absences.

Staff also conducted a number of surveys which focused on the wellbeing of young people throughout periods of remote learning. As a result, Guidance staff adapted the personal and social education programme to better support young people. They also worked closely with individual young people to develop other ways to support them.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

The headteacher has led the senior leadership team with commendable commitment, integrity and energy to inspire positive change in the culture of Craigie High School. She is supported well by the senior leadership team and staff now use evidence well to inform improvements. The headteacher models professional behaviour and supports a coaching style of leadership. Teachers are able to take responsibility increasingly for their own learning, through a range of leadership opportunities available to them. They learn well from and with each other, and have a relentless focus on improving outcomes for young people. Young people have a greater voice in their school using the 'Have your say' approach.

Staff are working well to develop a culture based on respectful, positive and strong relationships between young people and themselves. Staff are creating more purposeful, stimulating classroom environments which are supporting more effective learning. This is leading to young people being more motivated and involved actively in their learning. Teachers now need to ensure that all young people learn at an appropriate pace and level so that can achieve at the highest level possible. Staff across the school are more informed about young people's progress with their learning. Teachers now have more effective conversations with young people about their learning, especially in the senior phase. Young people, who are not making the progress expected, are identified earlier as a result of improved systems and processes for checking progress. This means that staff are able to intervene earlier with additional support. Attainment in a range of measures has improved as a result. We asked senior leaders to continue to check young people's progress regularly and to encourage teachers to increase their expectations of what learner success can look like.

Senior leaders led a series of learning events for staff based on nurturing approaches to support the wellbeing of all young people. Staff, with greater clarity provided on their roles, are more informed about what they can do to help all young people move forward in their learning. Senior leaders take account of a range of local and national employment information in developing the curriculum at Craigie High School. Staff now have a clearer focus on the skills young people need to develop to be successful. Teachers have increased the number of courses and learning opportunities available for young people. Staff are confident increasingly that the greater variety of courses is leading to better outcomes for young people.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

Frances E. Graham
HM Inspector



18 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education are currently carrying out visits to some schools and early learning and childcare settings across Scotland. When we wrote to you after the last inspection of Rockwell Learning Centre, we said that we would engage with the school to report on progress. We recently engaged in discussion with staff and the local authority and carried out a visit to Rockwell Learning Centre. Our engagement helped us learn more about how young people and their families, have been supported through the COVID-19 pandemic. We also heard about approaches that have been working well to support young people's health and wellbeing, learning and progress. We discussed with the headteacher and local authority officer the school's progress in taking forward the recommendations from our original inspection.

This letter sets out what we found during our visit.

Supporting children, young people and families through COVID-19

During the first period of school closure in April 2020, senior leaders ensured personal support was available for all young people and families in its school community. The support prioritised and focused on young people's wellbeing. School staff continued working with a few young people who required very targeted support. For these young people, the school building remained open. For all other young people, school staff provided valuable regular contact. By May 2020, senior leaders identified that a majority of young people were not benefiting fully from learning at home. Senior leaders, with support from the local authority, introduced opportunities for all young people to attend school for short periods during the school week. All initiatives introduced offered well-planned support for young people to re-engage with their learning safely.

By the second period of school closure in January 2021, senior leaders recognised the importance of keeping the school open. This resulted in most young people participating in more meaningful learning activities. Teachers supported young people well to achieve National Qualifications. Most young people have now successfully returned to full-time education and are engaging well with their learning.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, partnerships with external services were important in developing a wide range of skills for young people. Support from these services was withdrawn as a result of the pandemic. In response, school staff worked well together to plan and create purposeful learning experiences for young people. These new learning activities helped replace tasks normally developed and delivered by school partners. The school plans to reintroduce support from external services as part of their recovery from the pandemic.

Progress with recommendations from previous inspection

Overall, significant progress has been made in taking forward recommendations from the original inspection.

Staff provide well-planned support to young people. This is better meeting young people's needs and aspirations. Young people in S4 and S5 gain a valuable combination of National Qualifications and wider achievement awards. Commendably, despite the challenges faced by the pandemic, all young people are being supported well to transition successfully into further education, training or the workplace upon leaving school.

The headteacher and depute headteacher have successfully improved their knowledge about the progress that young people are making in their learning. They have regular meaningful discussions with teachers about young people's engagement with school activities and progress made with their learning. These discussions support the teachers plan relevant and interesting learning activities for young people. The headteacher and depute headteacher plan to gather more information to help them understand better how well the school delivers learning. The information gathered will support them identify what priorities they will have for next year.

Staff have improved how they plan and assess learning activities. This includes working with other schools to consider how well young people are progressing with their learning. There is an improvement in the range of appropriate subjects and qualifications which are available for young people. Overall, young people are improving their engagement with learning, attainment and achievement. Teachers will continue to work towards delivering increasingly consistent and high-quality learning experiences for all young people.

The headteacher and depute headteacher, supported by the staff team, have taken important steps to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of young people is central to the work of the school. Highly supportive staff are building positive relationships with young people. Young people feel safe and well respected in Rockwell Learning Centre. The school has allocated a key teacher to each young person and provides positive support for them and their family, including home visits. School staff will continue to focus on improving young people's attendance. Local authority officers and managers have agreed to monitor progress and support the school with improving attendance.

What happens next?

Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are implementing appropriate plans to support recovery. Staff have addressed the recommendations from the original inspection successfully. As a result, we will make no more visits to the school in connection with the original inspection. Dundee City Council will continue to inform parents about the school's progress as part of its usual arrangements for reporting on the quality of its education service.

David McKellar
HM Inspector

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