

**ITEM No ...5.....**

**REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER 2020**

**REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF SIDLAW VIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL – CONTINUING ENGAGEMENT**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE**

**REPORT NO: 231-2020**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Continuing Engagement visit by Education Scotland (HMI) to Sidlaw View Primary School.

**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 Sidlaw View Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland (HMI) in March 2019. They published a report of their findings on 4 June 2019. Education Scotland (HMI) returned for a Continuing Engagement visit on 13 January 2020. A Record of Visit (ROV) report following the Continuing Engagement visit was published on 6 March 2020.

4.2 The school's current Acting Head Teacher has been in post since June 2019. Around 88% of the pupils (165 pupils) attending the school reside within SIMD deciles 1 and 2 with around 12% of the school's pupil roll residing within SIMD deciles 3 and 5. 41% of the school's pupil roll registered for free school meals.

4.3 The school has benefited from our targeted and proportionate approaches to school improvement. In particular, through the work of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in Dundee, support has been facilitated through the Attainment Advisor, our Pedagogy Team and support for the improved use of data to identify areas for improvement. This is reflected in the findings of the inspection team.

4.4 In the Record of Visit (ROV) report the inspection team identified the following key strengths of the school:

- The acting headteacher and acting depute headteacher are providing strong, strategic leadership. Working alongside school and local authority staff, children and their parents, and partners, they are addressing at pace the key areas for improvement which were identified during the initial inspection.
- A targeted improvement plan is in place. This identifies actions the school has taken to address key areas for improvement. It also shows work which is taking place currently and planned next steps.
- Senior leaders continue to work with staff to improve learning and teaching. This includes staff engaging in professional learning with the pedagogy team and partners, and staff receiving regular feedback on learning and teaching from senior leaders and local authority staff.
- Senior leaders are visible and have a high profile in the school. This is contributing to a positive and improved culture across the school. There is now a calmer and purposeful work ethic in most areas, which is enhanced by respectful relationships between most children and staff.
- Staff have undertaken much work in relation to improving how staff use plans to support children's learning and wellbeing more widely.

The following areas for improvement were agreed with the school and Dundee City Council:

- There is a need for senior and middle leaders to continue to develop the capacity of staff, strengthening the culture of professional learning and nurturing the renewed sense of community across the school.
- As the school continues to improve, school leaders will need to review and evaluate how much of their time is spent responding to the needs of individual children
- Although most staff demonstrate increased skills in providing feedback to children to help them improve their work this continues to be an area for development.
- Staff now need time to fully implement agreed developments to ensure all children enjoy high quality learning experiences across the curriculum.
- As the school continues to improve, school leaders recognise the need to monitor the impact of new strategies and interventions

4.5 Overall the school has made some progress towards meeting the action points from HMI report as follows:

- The acting headteacher and acting depute headteacher are providing strong leadership and working well with staff, children, parents and partners to prioritise and address areas of improvement at pace.
- The school has made good progress in working with an increased range of partners
- Good progress has been made to develop whole school processes and approaches to support learning, teaching and assessment.
- The school has made good progress in developing approaches to improve wellbeing, inclusion and equality.

4.6 Education Scotland have intimated that they will liaise with Dundee City Council regarding the school's continuing capacity to improve and will return for a follow up inspection within one year of the Continuing Engagement visit.

4.7 The Education Manager and the school's link Education Officer will continue to monitor the school's progress and improvement in relation to the identified areas for improvement.

4.8 Sidlaw View Primary School's School Improvement Plans (2020/21 and beyond) will include a focus on the identified areas for improvement. These will be regularly reviewed, monitored and evaluated in line with both the school and the local authority's quality improvement procedures. The letter informing parents/carers of the progress made since the inspection of 2019 is attached as Appendix 1.

4.9 Planned school improvement activity building on the school's identified strengths and addressing the areas for development include:

- Increase in range of internal self-evaluation processes to include all stakeholders
- School Improvement Partnership meetings and reciprocal visits
- Termly visits from link Education Officer with updates on progress of action plan
- Professional Support Visits
- Moderation activities

4.10 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, visits are made to the school by the school's link Education Officer to monitor the school's progress towards the action points raised by the inspection. In support of such activity, a team of officers from the Children and Families Service will undertake regular visits to the school to evaluate the school's progress in addressing identified weaknesses. These visits will have a particular focus on: evaluating the consistency or otherwise of high quality learning and teaching across all stages within the school; the introduction and impact of robust self-evaluation procedures; and, the implementation of improved procedures to track and monitor children's progress in key learning areas including literacy and numeracy.

## **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.

PAUL CLANCY  
Executive Director of Children and Families Service

Michelle Lewis  
Education Officer



**Dundee City Council**  
**Children and Families Service**  
**Scrutiny Committee Report Summary Notes**  
**Inspection and Reporting**

|                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Inspection Agency       | HMI                        |
| Report Publication Date |                            |
| Name of Establishment   | Sidlaw View Primary School |
| Sector                  | Primary                    |
| Name of Head Teacher    | Mrs Kim Flynn (Acting)     |
| Roll                    | 187 primary children       |

**Inspection Outcomes 2019**

| <b>Quality Indicator</b>                              | <b>Primary Rating</b> |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>1.3 Leadership of change</b>                       | weak                  |
| <b>2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment</b>          | weak                  |
| <b>3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</b> | weak                  |
| <b>3.2 Raising attainment and achievement</b>         | satisfactory          |

The report uses the following word scale:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| excellent      | outstanding, sector leading                         |
| very good      | major strengths                                     |
| good           | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| satisfactory   | strengths just outweigh weaknesses                  |
| weak           | important weaknesses                                |
| unsatisfactory | major weaknesses                                    |

**Inspection Outcomes January 2009**

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Improvements in Performance</b>  | <b>Good</b> |
| Learners' experiences               | Good        |
| Meeting learning needs              | Good        |
| Pupils' learning experiences        | Good        |
| The curriculum                      | Good        |
| Improvement through self-evaluation | Good        |

The report uses the following word scale:

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| excellent      | outstanding, sector leading                         |
| very good      | major strengths                                     |
| good           | important strengths with some areas for improvement |
| adequate       | strengths just outweigh weaknesses                  |
| weak           | important weaknesses                                |
| unsatisfactory | major weaknesses                                    |

Please note that a revised set of national quality indicators were launched in 2015 with the introduction of How Good is Our School? (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Caution should be used in making direct comparisons between new quality indicators and 'similar' previous indicators where the focus and weighting of factors has significantly changed e.g. the shift in teaching and learning towards learner autonomy away from teacher behaviours.

During the intervening period between the 2009 and 2019 HMI inspections, the local authority has continued to evaluate the quality of educational provision within the school using the version of How Good Is Our School? in use at the time.

## Inspection Outcomes 2019

### Key Strengths

Staff are committed to professional learning in order to improve how they meet children's needs. This includes learning about nurturing approaches.

The learning experiences of the youngest children have been enhanced through good quality play-based learning.

The school has developed structured approaches to improve the teaching of reading and numeracy. These are beginning to have a positive effect on children's experiences

### Areas for Improvement and Action

Senior leaders need to demonstrate stronger leadership which prioritises 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 improving wellbeing, inclusion and equality

### Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School's Improvement Plan 2019 was amended to reflect the areas for improvement identified by HMI and provide a clear strategic focus for related school improvement.

The Summarised Inspection Findings highlighted the following strengths and areas for improvement within each of the quality indicators.

#### **Leadership of change – strengths**

All staff participate in the planning process, contributing to reviewing and setting the school's improvement priorities. Senior leaders use a few self-evaluation activities to inform school improvement. They work with individual teachers regularly to review and analyse information on children's progress, putting in place interventions as appropriate. Senior leaders have used Pupil Equity Funds appropriately to target interventions in relation to improving attendance and late coming and improving the pace of learning across P1 and P2. These interventions are beginning to have a positive effect on young people's learning and attainment.

#### **Leadership of change – areas for improvement**

A number of plans, reviews and frameworks are in place to support school improvement. The school should provide increased clarity as to how its priorities for improvement will be taken forward in a planned and progressive way. An important part of evaluating the work of the school should also be an increased focus on observation of learning and teaching by senior leaders to provide clear feedback to staff to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Children experience very few leadership opportunities in the school. Children at P7 value the opportunities but the Pupil Council is in the early stages of development.

#### **Learning, teaching and assessment – strengths**

Children enjoy using digital tools in their learning. In the best examples, children use digital skills to access the internet for research purposes. They are being supported to learn to use reliable sources. The school uses a range of programmes to support learning in literacy and numeracy. Teachers make use of a range of assessments tools, including standardised assessments to measure children's progress and identify next steps.

#### **Learning, teaching and assessment – areas for improvement**

The quality of teaching across the school is too variable. The school does not yet have shared values to underpin its work. Staff need to work together to develop a shared understanding of standards and expectations. There remains considerable work to do to ensure the learning needs of all children at Sidlaw View are met well.

#### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – strengths**

Across the school, staff are committed to including every child in the life of the school. The school can demonstrate that there are particular groups of children, such as those who are young carers, who benefit from inclusive approaches which have been developed. The school is working to support children in improving their attendance and late-coming. Commendably, the school has developed approaches to support the wellbeing of staff and the wider school community.

#### **Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion – areas for improvement**

The school does not yet have agreed strategies to promote positive behaviour consistently. This is evident in the ways that a few children disengage often from their learning and display inappropriate behaviour in classes and in the playground. Well-considered strategies would support all teachers to manage challenging behaviour more effectively and help all children to better engage in their learning.

A significant number of children in the school face barriers to learning and require additional support with their learning. These children need to have their progress monitored, tracked and recorded more effectively to ensure that they make appropriate progress in their learning.

Senior leaders need to ensure that all plans written by the school are robust, have clear targets and comply with best practice.

#### **Raising attainment and achievement – strengths**

The overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, with the majority of children achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. The school is beginning to use tracking and monitoring data more effectively to identify and plan interventions for children. As well as providing support for individual children, senior leaders are providing additional support for a few targeted groups of children, such as those who are care experienced and young carers. This is beginning to lead to improved experiences for a few children, which takes better account of their needs

#### **Raising attainment and achievement – areas for improvement**

Overall, attainment in writing is weak. There are a significant number of children across the school who could achieve more. The school has identified writing as an area for improvement. Attainment data was provided by the school for literacy and numeracy for the past three years.

This illustrates variable trends. Senior leaders and teachers should now use all of the information which they gather on children's progress in a more focused and rigorous way. This will help to ensure that they optimise opportunities for children to achieve.

Following publication of the inspection findings, the school's Acting Head Teacher has taken prompt action in leading related school improvements.

#### **Key activity to date has included the following:**

A short-term action plan was developed by the acting head teacher with support from the education authority, and this identified appropriate immediate actions for improvement immediately prior to inspection. Following the inspection the local authority appointed an experienced head teacher and an additional deputy head teacher to support the school's improvement journey.

Work is already underway in improving the culture and ethos across the school, celebrating success, changes to the school playground and positive partnership with parents. This work will continue with the new leadership team leading the development of the school's vision, values and aims during session 2019-2020.

The staff team are demonstrating a collegiate approach to supporting creating a positive learning environment including taking forward aspects of leadership and this work will continue with classroom teachers leading key aspects of school improvement in session 2019-2020.

The school is at the early stages of developing a whole school approach which will underpin all staff's understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting children's health and wellbeing and this remains a key priority for the school to develop this session.



Senior leaders, with support from the local authority, have taken the first steps towards developing a whole school raising attainment strategy, beginning with a focus on creating a more positive learning climate. There are early positive signs that this is starting to support children to engage more readily in learning. The school and the local authority recognise that much remains to be improved in order to ensure all children make the best possible progress as they move through the school.

Full details of the Summarised inspection findings are available at:  
<https://education.gov.scot/assets/inspectionreports/sidlawviewpssif040619.pdf>

**Signed:**



**Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service**



**Audrey May, Head of Service (Chief Education Officer)**

**Kim Flynn, Acting Head Teacher, Sidlaw View Primary School**



3 March 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In June 2019, HM Inspectors published a letter on Sidlaw View Primary School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and Dundee City Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to children and worked closely with the acting headteacher and staff. We heard from the acting headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting children's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Senior leaders need to demonstrate stronger leadership which prioritises 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.

The acting headteacher and acting depute headteacher are providing strong leadership and working well with staff, children, parents and partners to prioritise and address areas of improvement at pace. A targeted improvement plan is in place, which identifies actions the school has taken to address areas for improvement. This plan also highlights current work and next steps. Children on the pupil council and learning council are now involved in evaluating the school's work and working closely with staff to plan ongoing improvement. Senior leaders enable children to engage more fully in the life of the school and share their views more regularly. As a result, children's self-esteem has improved. Children have been involved recently in developing and promoting the school values. Senior leaders and staff model well these values in their actions. Most staff show increased willingness and confidence to lead aspects of the school's work and they have higher aspirations and expectations of themselves and the children. Senior leaders work closely with a range of partners. Partners note an increased sense of purpose in the school and appreciate how they are encouraged to plan jointly with senior leaders. Whilst the school has made good progress in this key area of improvement, much work is still in the early stages of development. Further work is needed to align the school vision and values with the aims. Additionally, senior leaders need to continue to develop the capacity of staff, strengthening the culture of professional learning and nurturing the renewed sense of community across 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.

Good progress has been made to develop whole school processes and approaches to support learning, teaching and assessment. These are helping staff create a calm, purposeful learning environment in most classes, with fewer interruptions to learning and teaching. The acting headteacher and acting depute headteacher are highly visible around the school and have established their office next to the classrooms. This is helping them support staff in a more effective and timely manner. Senior leaders are working well with a range of partners to plan more appropriate learning experiences for children who need extra help. The school has begun to develop a 'Sidlaw View Standard'. This is helping staff deliver more consistent approaches to high-quality learning, teaching and assessment across the school to raise attainment. In the majority of lessons, most children now engage well with their learning and listen carefully to instructions. They respond well to praise. Most children are also beginning to develop skills in pair and group work, and in using digital technologies. Although most staff provide improved feedback to children to help them improve their work this remains an area for development. Staff have participated in a range of professional learning opportunities to develop further their skills in learning and teaching. They are now more confident and increasingly skilled in sharing the purpose of learning with children, and helping children understand how to be successful. Local authority staff have supported teachers well. In



# Education Scotland

Foghlam Alba

particular, staff engagement with the local authority literacy team is helping them teach reading to a more consistent high-quality standard. Teachers have developed a shared understanding of approaches to providing literacy and numeracy work that meets the needs of individual children. To further support the school's work in raising attainment, the headteacher has developed a range of high-quality planning and recording tools to enable teachers to plan and assess children's learning more effectively.

The headteacher has also developed approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress across the curriculum. These approaches help staff maintain a clearer focus on children's progress. Staff need time now to implement agreed developments fully, helping ensure all children enjoy high quality experiences across the curriculum. Staff are working well to resolve the challenges of a few children who continue to find it difficult to settle and focus on learning and a few children who are not yet in receipt of full-time education.

Develop the curriculum to ensure that children can build on their learning as they move through the school and have relevant motivating experiences.

Staff have acted promptly to offer children an improved curriculum experience. They have developed a draft plan for the curriculum which reflects better the unique setting of Sidlaw View. Clear pathways are in place for all curriculum areas to help teachers ensure that children can build on their learning as they move through the school. These also help improve teachers' confidence in understanding progression and standards within and across Curriculum for Excellence levels in all curriculum areas. Teachers are now well placed to build on children's learning through each stage of their learning. Staff work well together to offer children a broad general education (BGE). They plan learning across all curriculum areas across the school year. Children enjoy their new learning in science and religious and moral education and are proud of their achievements in music. They enjoy particularly numeracy and writing and are highly motivated and excited when they can learn outdoors. There is still work to be done in consulting with parents and partners to ensure that everyone has a shared ownership and understanding of the curriculum. A next step for the school is to develop children's knowledge and skill in social studies and art and design. Senior leaders recognise too that the school needs to refresh its approaches to modern languages. Staff should continue to plan to ensure that all children benefit from a progressive and relevant BGE.

As a matter of priority, ensure that all children's needs are met. Staff should now develop approaches to improving wellbeing, inclusion and equality.

The school has made good progress in developing approaches to improve wellbeing, inclusion and equality. There is now a much-improved ethos across the school, enhanced by respectful relationships between most children and staff. The acting headteacher and acting depute headteacher have developed partnership working to help staff meet the needs of all children effectively. Senior leaders acknowledge there is still work to be done in liaising with partners to meet the emotional and learning needs of a few children. Joint planning is now taking place more consistently between the school and partners to provide well-judged universal and targeted support for children. Senior leaders work with staff, parents and partners to develop and review plans that support children's learning. They are setting focused learning targets for children that take account of their prior learning and barriers to learning. They are also beginning to review children's progress towards meeting these targets and setting new targets as required. Children benefit from one-to-one support, group support and a variety of new and exciting experiences and opportunities to meet their learning needs. Senior leaders have used Pupil Equity Funding well to provide much of this support. Children's needs are also met more effectively now during morning breaks and lunchtimes. Senior leaders have made improvements to outdoor spaces, for example making adaptations to the playground and adding new playground equipment and games. This is supporting children to play and engage with one another more effectively. The school needs to develop further its approaches to promoting positive behaviour to ensure all children continue to feel safe and happy. As the school continues to improve, school leaders recognise the need to monitor regularly the impact of new strategies and interventions to ensure they meet children's needs well.



# Education Scotland

Foghlam Alba

What happens next?

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Dundee City Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Dundee City Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Celia McArthur  
HM Inspector