

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 23 SEPTEMBER 2020

REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF ST JOSEPH’S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 233-2020

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Education Scotland (HMI) inspection of St Joseph’s RC 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 St Joseph’s RC Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland (HMI) in September 2019. They published a report of their findings on 21 January 2020. At the time of the inspection 342 children were on the primary school roll.

4.2 The school’s current Head Teacher has been in post since October 2015. 21% of the pupils reside in SIMD 1 and 2 with 46% residing in SIMD 1-3. 22% 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, though 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 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school’s work:

- The Head Teacher demonstrates very strong leadership. Alongside senior and middle leaders, she has created a very positive culture for learning across the school. This is supported well by Gospel values, and respectful and supportive relationships between children and staff and amongst children.
- Increasingly, staff are adopting creative approaches to improve learning and teaching. They are developing their practice by engaging inappropriate, collaborative professional learning with partners. They are also using data more effectively to inform learning and teaching.
- Children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school.

4.5 There is a strong culture of leadership in the school. The headteacher and senior leaders continue to support children and all staff to develop their skills and contribute well to the life of the school.

4.6 Importantly, the inspection team highlighted that children from across the school participate well in activities such as, “Toast Café”. The “Toast Café” is an enterprise activity that children facilitate for their peers. They fundraise through the activity and take on leadership roles. These include welcoming people, taking orders, and preparing food and drink. Children apply to take part in this activity and undergo an interview before being selected. Children are enthusiastic about their participation. They highlight, “giving something back” and “being kind to others” as reasons for their involvement. Support staff and classroom teachers support children very well in this activity.

4.7 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Head Teacher and a representative from Dundee City Council:

- Develop consistency in learning and teaching, including using digital technologies more regularly, to support children’s progress. Staff should also continue to plan and assess children’s learning effectively across all curricular areas, so that all children are able to make coherent progress.
- Use data more effectively to plan appropriate learning for children and ensure that all children are supported well to reach their potential.

4.8 Education Scotland (HMI) reports using a six-point scale for reporting performance:

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

4.9 The following quality evaluations were given at this inspection:

Quality Indicator	St Joseph’s RC Primary School
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

4.10 Education Scotland are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dundee City Council will inform parents and carers about the school’s progress through St. Joseph’s RC Primary’s annual School Improvement Report.

4.11 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.

4.12 St. Joseph’s RC 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 attached appendix provides a synopsis of the Summary of Inspection Findings.

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

- Internal self-evaluation processes
- School Improvement Partnership meetings and reciprocal visits
- Termly visits from link Education Officer
- Professional Support Visits
- Moderation activities

4.14 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. The school's School Improvement Plan (2020/21) clearly articulates the areas for development highlighted by HM Inspectors.

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

Angela Innes/ Tracey Stewart
Education Officers

June 2020

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

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	September 2019
Name of Establishment	St Joseph's RC Primary School
Sector	Primary
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Michelle Louden
Roll	342 primary children

Inspection Outcomes 2019

Quality Indicator	Primary Rating
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good

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 October 2007

How good are learning, teaching and achievement	Primary Class Rating
Structure of the curriculum	Adequate
The teaching process	Good
Pupils' learning experiences	Adequate
Pupils' attainment in English language	Good
Pupils' attainment in mathematics	Good

How well are pupils learning needs met?	Primary Rating
Meeting pupils' needs	Good

How good is the environment for learning?	Primary Rating
Pastoral care	Very Good
Accommodation and facilities	Good
Climate and relationships	Very Good
Expectations and promoting achievement	Very Good
Equality and fairness	Very Good
Partnerships with parents, the School Board, and the community	Very Good

Leading and improving the school	Primary Rating
Leadership of the head teacher	Good
Self-evaluation	Adequate

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? (4th 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 2007 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

The Head Teacher demonstrates very strong leadership. Alongside senior and middle leaders, she has created a very positive culture for learning across the school. This is supported well by Gospel values, and respectful and supportive relationships between children and staff and amongst children.

Increasingly, staff are adopting creative approaches to improve learning and teaching. They are developing their practice by engaging in appropriate, collaborative professional learning with partners. They are also using data more effectively to inform learning and teaching.

Children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school.

Areas for Improvement

Develop consistency in learning and teaching, including using digital technologies more regularly, to support children's progress. Staff should also continue to plan and assess children's learning effectively across all curricular areas, so that all children are able to make coherent progress.

Use data more effectively to plan appropriate learning for children and ensure that all children are supported well to reach their potential.

Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School's Improvement Plan 2020/21 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.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- There is a welcoming and purposeful ethos in the school. This is supported well by the very strong leadership of the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and staff who have created a positive culture of learning. Gospel Values, including values such as support, teamwork, justice and honesty, underpin the school's work. Almost all children are confident, respectful and polite and they are supportive of each other's learning. Relationships amongst all children and between almost all staff and children are positive.
- Almost all children are enthusiastic learners. In most classes, children experience learning which is well matched to their needs. At all stages, the pace and challenge of learning for the most able children needs to be increased. At the upper stages, most children are skilled at working collaboratively and independently. At the early stages, children are being given opportunities to develop these skills well. A few children would like more opportunities to lead their learning.
- Almost all children are given opportunities to reflect on their learning. At all stages, children discuss their learning with each other. Most children talk enthusiastically and articulately about their next steps. Almost all teachers use feedback well when assessing writing tasks. This supports children to understand their learning. Teachers now need to develop their use of feedback across all curricular areas. Learning Logs are used in all classes to help children reflect regularly on what they have learned. These should be shared more often with parents to empower them to support their children's learning more effectively.

- In almost all classes, teachers give clear instructions and explanations to children. In a few classes, teachers use questioning skilfully. As planned, staff should continue to develop questioning across the school to help children develop their thinking skills. In most classes, teachers use children's prior learning well. This is enabling children to make good progress and develop their skills appropriately. Most staff use creative approaches to engage children in their learning. This is helping children to become more motivated and curious. Teachers also use learning environments thoughtfully to engage and motivate children.
- Almost all teachers are developing and expanding the use of digital technologies to support learning and teaching. They should continue to develop their skills to enable them to use digital technologies more consistently and confidently. Children gain digital skills through their use of the computer suite. These skills should now be practised across the curriculum. The school is beginning to use outdoor learning well to support children's learning across the curriculum and develop their skills for learning, life and work.
- Almost all staff engage in collaborative professional learning linked to learning, teaching and assessment. A few teachers are engaging in enquiry-based approaches, which are beginning to lead to improved outcomes for children. Other staff are involved in creative work with professional partners. This is helping them to develop their understanding of pedagogy and practice.
- All teachers use a range of assessments to evaluate children's progress. Consistently, they use summative assessments to help them understand children's learning needs more effectively. This includes national standardised assessments. Teachers use assessment linked to the school's approach to writing effectively. All teachers use the National Benchmarks for literacy and numeracy to help them assess and determine children's progress. They should continue to work together to develop their understanding of the National Benchmarks for all curricular areas. This will help them to ensure children make more coherent and consistent progress at all stages.
- Teachers plan learning well, over different timescales, to ensure that children receive their curricular entitlements. Recently, teachers streamlined their approach to planning to link more closely children's experiences and outcomes to the assessment of their learning. This is helping staff to develop a better understanding of how they can support children's learning more effectively. Teachers are beginning to use "progression frameworks" that have been designed by local authority staff, to help them plan and assess children's progress across all curricular areas.
- Increasingly, teachers are making effective use of data to track and monitor children's progress. They are using data to plan targeted interventions to support the learning of individual and groups of children. A next step for the school will be for senior leaders and staff to continue with their plans to develop a better understanding of ways in which interventions are having an impact on children's learning. This will help them to ensure that all interventions are appropriate and timely, leading to raised attainment. Staff need to develop their approaches to tracking to help them develop a better understanding of children's learning and progress across the curriculum.
- All teachers are using their professional judgement to determine children's progress regularly in literacy and numeracy. They evaluate and record children's progress at different stages in the school year. Teachers' professional judgement continues to improve as a result of them engaging in collaborative activities in the school and local cluster. Teachers evaluate one another's work regularly. This is also helping them to develop increased consistency in their learning and teaching.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is good. Evidence provided by the school on children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for 2018-2019 shows that by the end of P1, most children achieved early level in reading, listening and talking and numeracy. The majority of children achieved early level in writing. At P4, most children achieved first level for reading, listening and talking and numeracy. The majority of children achieved first level in writing. By P7, most children achieved second level in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. A few children exceeded these levels.
- Most children who require additional support with their learning are making appropriate progress.
- Inspection activity agrees with most of the school's attainment data in literacy and numeracy. Further planned opportunities for the moderation of listening and talking will strengthen the reliability of teacher's professional judgement in this area.
- Regular tracking meetings take place between the senior leadership team and all teaching staff to discuss children's progress and achievement. Interventions are put in place for children who require additional support and challenge with learning. These interventions are helping children to raise their attainment.
- Most children are making good progress in literacy and English.
- At early level, most children listen well to nursery rhymes and can recall and sequence key events from these. They are able to answer simple questions about a text to demonstrate understanding. A few children need to develop their confidence in talking about the stories they enjoy to a wider audience. By first level, most children can take turns and contribute appropriately when engaging with others. At second level, most children use persuasive language effectively when debating. They are less confident in using a range of questioning to support their comprehension of spoken text.
- Staff are using a structured and targeted approach to develop children's reading skills. This is having a positive impact on children's progress and attainment. There is a positive culture of reading in the school. At the early stages of primary, most children are making good progress in identifying initial letter sounds. A few children can blend letters to make words. Most children can identify punctuation cues such as capital letters, full-stops and question marks. Children should now practise reading aloud using these clues. At first level, most children can explain the difference between fiction and no-fiction. At first and second level, most children talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and books. At second level, most children can apply a range of reading skills, such as skimming, scanning and predicting. They are beginning to develop their understanding of summarising and how to determine the reliability of sources of information.
- At the early stages of primary, most children are forming letters and attempting to spell familiar words correctly. They are using capital letters and full stops to write sentences. Children are developing their use of vocabulary to convey meaning within different contexts. At first level, most children can identify nouns and connectives in their writing and use adjectives to make their texts more interesting. All children write in different genres. Children need to become more confident in writing about what interests them. At second level, most children are developing pieces of writing and creating texts for a range of purposes. They make relevant links between their literacy skills and the world of work.
- Most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics. At all stages, a few children would benefit from receiving additional challenge in their learning. This would help them deepen their learning.
- At early level, children count items accurately and use a range of strategies to solve addition and subtraction problems. They now need to develop their understanding of sharing and grouping. Almost all children use mathematical language well in relation to time, money and measure. At first level, almost all children solve problems involving whole numbers and fractions. They would benefit from further experience in ordering fractions. They also need

further work on estimating and measuring accurately in a range of relevant contexts. At second level, the majority of children can solve problems using their knowledge of whole numbers, fractions and decimals. Most children work confidently with money and time. Children now need to learn how to calculate area, perimeter and volume and apply this in real life settings.

- Children at early level can make 2D shapes and 3D objects. Most children at first level are able to describe them using appropriate mathematical language. Almost all children at this level know the four compass points and can perform calculations involving 90 degree turns. At second level, all children can draw acute, obtuse, straight and reflex angles. Children across the school need to develop their learning of shape, position and movement by applying their knowledge in different contexts.
- Children at early level collect information to undertake surveys. At first level, children talk confidently about the probability of events happening. This is helping them to develop their reasoning. At second level, all children can calculate probabilities using fractions. Children at first and second levels would benefit from more experience in working with data, including data from digital sources, across the curriculum.
- The school provided data on children's progress across literacy and numeracy for the last three years, including children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. The data is based on teacher's professional judgement. Teacher's professional judgement is informed by a range of assessments, including standardised assessments.
- Data indicates that the school has raised attainment in literacy and numeracy over time. Whole-school approaches to improving learning, teaching and assessment in reading and writing and a focus on conceptual understanding in numeracy have contributed to school improvements in these areas.
- Senior leaders scrutinise data that is gathered by the school over time, as well as data that is provided by Dundee City Council. This is discussed with teachers at tracking meetings. Although the school is data rich, there is scope for all staff to develop further confidence in using data to plan appropriate learning for children. This will help to ensure that all children are supported well in reaching their potential.
- Children enjoy a range of relevant opportunities for wider achievement. They participate in extra-curricular clubs and groups, such as the choir, football and an Eco Council. They also volunteer for roles of responsibility, such as the pupil council, house captains and peer mediators. Children lead successfully the "Toast Café". Children also take part in activities such as the Pope Francis Faith Award, which involves them in volunteering and engaging in charity work. As a result of these activities, children are developing a range of skills for learning, life and work. They are becoming increasingly aware of the contribution they can make to the school and local community. Children's successes are shared and celebrated. This helps them to develop a sense of pride and build their confidence. Across the school, children demonstrate caring attitudes towards each other and are learning how to be responsible global citizens.
- Staff encourage all children to participate in activities outside the classroom, building on their talents and interests. The school tracks children's participation in these activities, as well as children's engagement in leadership roles. Senior leaders recognise the potential of the school's tracking system to identify children who are at risk of missing out. A next step for the school will be to use the tracking system more fully. This will help to ensure that all children are able to take part in activities and are aware of the skills they are developing.
- Senior leaders and all staff have a good knowledge of the varied socio-economic context of the school. They know their children and families very well and have created an inclusive learning environment. The environment values and celebrates diversity across the school community. Staff review regularly their approaches to curriculum design. This is helping them to provide all children with creative opportunities for success.
- Pupil Equity Funding has been used in a variety of ways to raise the attainment of individual and groups of children in literacy and numeracy. This has included senior leaders introducing whole-school approaches to reading and writing and providing professional learning to all staff

to improve their pedagogy. Children's attainment in literacy and numeracy has improved. Commendably, senior leaders have engaged with stakeholders to create a "Cost of the School Day" plan. This is ensuring that children at risk of facing barriers to their learning make good progress from their prior levels of attainment.

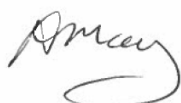
Full details of the Summarised inspection findings are available at:

<https://education.gov.scot/media/g0ej4x0v/stjosephsrcpssif210120.pdf>

Signed



Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service



Audrey May, Head of Service (Chief Education Officer)

Michelle Loudon, St. Joseph's RC Primary School

21 January 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In September 2019, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited St Joseph's RC Primary School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher demonstrates very strong leadership. Alongside senior and middle leaders, she has created a very positive culture for learning across the school. This is supported well by Gospel values, and respectful and supportive relationships between children and staff and amongst children.
- Increasingly, staff are adopting creative approaches to improve learning and teaching. They are developing their practice by engaging in appropriate, collaborative professional learning with partners. They are also using data more effectively to inform learning and teaching.
- Children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Dundee City Council.

- Develop consistency in learning and teaching, including using digital technologies more regularly, to support children's progress. Staff should also continue to plan and assess children's learning effectively across all curricular areas, so that all children are able to make coherent progress
- Use data more effectively to plan appropriate learning for children and ensure that all children are supported well to reach their potential.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4th edition\)](#). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for St Joseph's RC Primary School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition). Appendix 3: The six-point scale	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:

<https://education.gov.scot/education-scotland/inspection-reports/reports-page/?id=4601>

What happens next?

We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Dundee City Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Celia McArthur
HM Inspector

