

**REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –27 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF CLAYPOTTS CASTLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

**REPORT NO: 279-2023**

**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 Claypotts Castle 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 Claypotts Castle Primary School was inspected by His Majesty's (HM) Inspectors from Education Scotland in April 2023.

4.2 Claypotts Castle Primary School is situated in the Douglas area in the East End of Dundee. The school roll is 356 children, organised across 14 classes. There is a nursery class situated within the school building. The school includes the Enhanced Support Area (ESA) for hearing impaired education, known as 'The Link Room'.

4.3 The Head Teacher has been in post for three years and is supported by one Depute Head Teacher and one Principal Teacher. At the time of the inspection, the Principal Teacher post was vacant.

4.4 86 per cent of pupils live in the 20 per cent most deprived data zones in Scotland. The school receives a significant amount of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Children's attendance is below the national average.

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

- A strong sense of community within the school contributes to a calm, safe and nurturing learning environment.
- Children are enthusiastic, motivated and engage well in all activities. They identify strongly with their school.
- The highly effective, caring leadership of the Head Teacher and depute Head Teacher. This is driven by their high aspirations for all children to succeed.
- The whole staff team ensures all children have many opportunities to achieve. They manage this through very effective partnership working.
- Parents are very positive about the difference the school is making to their children's lives.

4.6 The inspectors recognised the significant progress the school was making as they recovered from the pandemic and recognised that sound planning was in place to continue to improve the school. Most of the inspector's recommendations reflected the school's own improvement plan for 2022-23.

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

- Develop further consistently high-quality approaches to learning and teaching to ensure all children are challenged in their learning activities.
- Develop further approaches to check children's progress in all areas of their learning. Senior leaders should now increase their focus on measuring children's progress over the longer term. They should use a range of information to ensure a clear picture of children's progress over time

4.8 Education Scotland (HMI) uses a six-point scale for grading the quality indicators:

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 Here are Education Scotland's (HMI) evaluations for Claypotts Castle Primary School for this inspection:

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	Very Good
Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good
Raising attainment and achievement	Good

4.10 As a result of the inspection findings, Education Scotland is confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so 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.

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

4.12 Claypotts Castle Primary School has reviewed its current school improvement plan and has incorporated the recommendations from the Summarised Inspection Findings into a plan from March 2023-June 2024. This 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:

- All staff to develop and implement a shared understanding of what constitutes high quality learning and teaching and apply this consistently across the school.

- All staff to consistently use tracking and monitoring systems effectively to monitor progress in learning of all young people.
- Developing a tracking system to capture attainment and achievement information for every child to allow all staff to plan accordingly to meet pupils needs, celebrate successes and senior leadership to identify appropriate interventions.
- Continue to co-create the East End Community Plan with the Communities Team and ensure our school improvement agenda is aligned with the ambition and vision of Community building.
- Share our success with using the Communities plan as an agenda for change across other schools.
- Focus our ongoing work on tackling health inequality and develop our new partnership with the NHS and Best Foot Forward. To use the allotments to create rich curricular experiences for all our children and connect the wider community to the school through this ongoing work.
- Continue to host school events in the Community Centre to showcase our learning and exceed an average of 200 families attending at each event.
- Build on our wider achievement offer and move from 285 children attending an after school club weekly in school to all of our children.
- Develop our Sports Performance offer to increase the number of children moving into a community club pathway
- Continue to recruit/invite other schools to participate in our Transition Sports Programme to the new East End Community Campus. Over 300 children from cluster/double cluster schools attended the festivals we created and hosted in Sports and Science.
- Continue to recruit more S5/S6 Sports Leaders from Craigie High School to support our ongoing Sports Provision
- Connect more families to the work of the wider Communities Team including the Food Larder beyond the 50 families who connected during our school events.
- Continue to lead and share across the city our Holiday Camp offer at October, April and Summer. Over 150 children on average attended each day during the four weeks of camp we offered last year. Extend our offer to build on the success of including St Pius Primary School children.
- Build on our recent Lego League success as winners of the Regional final for innovation and compete nationally.
- Continue to influence schools nationally with our strategic use of PEF funding and the creation of an Active Schools Assistant Position.
- Build on our residential partnership offer with SportScotland to the National Performance Centre in Largs for our Primary Seven children.
- Develop our work with partners to develop the use of the new community park and link our curriculum offer to intergenerational projects and community building.
- Develop our Girls Only Sports Programme to build a safe space for girls across four schools across different ages to come together through sport each week at the Douglas Sports Centre. Last year over 250 children attended our Girls Only Programme supported by Craigie High Sports Leaders one afternoon a week.
- Continue to work with local partners Dundee Bairns to support our family tea clubs beyond the 50 families who benefitted last year. Work closely with the charity to ensure our school clothing needs are met.
- Build on our success with the recent national awards in Sport, Digital Learning and Reading.

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 reviewed School Improvement Plan clearly articulates the areas for development highlighted by HM Inspectors.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has

not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Council Leadership Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

Audrey May  
Executive Director  
September 2023

Paul Fleming  
Chief Education Officer

Children and Families Service

Scrutiny Committee Report Summary Notes

Inspection and Reporting

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	June 2023
Name of Establishment	Claypotts Castle Primary School
Sector	Primary
Name of Head Teacher	Mr Nicky Murray
Roll	356 young people

Inspection Outcomes 2023

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	Very Good
Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Very Good
Raising attainment and achievement	Good

The report uses the following word scale:

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
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weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Key Strengths
A strong sense of community within the school contributes to a calm, safe and nurturing learning environment. Children are enthusiastic, motivated and engage well in all activities. They identify strongly with their school.
The highly effective, caring leadership of the Head Teacher and depute Head Teacher. This is driven by their high aspirations for all children to succeed.
The whole staff team ensures all children have many opportunities to achieve. They manage this through very effective partnership working.
Parents are very positive about the difference the school is making to their children’s lives.

Areas for Improvement
Develop further approaches to check children’s progress in all areas of their learning. Senior leaders should now increase their focus on measuring children’s progress over the longer term. They should use a range of information to ensure a clear picture of children’s progress over time.
Develop further consistently high-quality approaches to learning and teaching to ensure all children are challenged in their learning activities.

## **Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings**

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School Improvement Plan 2022-23 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 with each of the quality indicators.

## **Leadership of change**

### **Strengths**

All staff at Claypotts Castle Primary School ensure that every child is valued as an individual, happy, safe and achieving at school.

The Head Teacher is passionate about supporting the school community and is held in high regard by parents, staff and community partners. He is ambitious and relentless in his aim to improve outcomes for children at Claypotts Castle Primary School and the Douglas community.

The values are reflected strongly in the positive culture of the school community. All children, parents, partners and staff demonstrate these values consistently in all actions. Children

The Head Teacher provides highly effective leadership for the school community. His energy, enthusiasm and determination motivates and empowers staff and the wider community to improve outcomes for all children. He takes a carefully considered approach to improving the work and life of the school.

Children have valuable opportunities to express their views during assemblies, learning conferences and in discussion with the Head Teacher. These opportunities lead to a number of improvements.

Staff speak positively about the quality and relevance of professional learning opportunities.

Senior leaders promote leadership opportunities for children as a key part of school improvement.

The Head Teacher has established effective partnership working in a short space of time. He is very proactive in seeking advice and support from a wide range of partners.

The Head Teacher has a range of effective plans in place to help raise the attainment and achievement of children adversely affected by their socio-economic circumstances.

The Head Teacher uses the East End Community Plan to effectively influence school priorities.

### **Areas for improvement**

Senior leaders should continue to develop their use of all data to measure the impact improvements are having on raising attainment.

As planned, senior leaders should continue to review approaches to quality assure learning, teaching and assessment.

## **Learning, teaching and assessment**

### **Strengths**

Children experience a nurturing classroom ethos underpinned by positive, mutually respectful relationships.

Children are well behaved, polite and keen to talk to adults about their learning. Children are very proud of their school and speak positively about the support they receive and the opportunities that are available to them.

Almost all teachers effectively share the purpose of learning with children.

In most lessons, teachers' explanations and instructions are clear.

Children experience Science, Technology, Art and Maths lessons which follow a progressive curriculum and develop their creativity skills

Teachers use digital technology effectively to support teaching.

Senior leaders use PEF appropriately to build capacity within the staff team and provide additional staff for targeted work.

Teachers moderate planning, learning, teaching, and assessment within levels and with stage partners.

Teachers are becoming more confident tracking children's progress in planned learning. This is strengthening the reliability of their professional judgements about children's attainment.

### **Areas for improvement**

Teachers should now improve the quality of questioning to support children develop higher order thinking skills and increase the level of challenge.

Staff should continue to develop creative approaches to allow children to lead their own learning.

Staff should continue to engage in ongoing and robust self-evaluation of play-based approaches.

Staff should use a wider range of digital technologies to enable children to develop digital skills further.

As planned, senior leaders should continue to work with teachers, to ensure the shared purpose of learning reflects accurately the intended learning.

All teachers now need to follow agreed approaches within classroom environments consistently.

## **Curriculum: Learning pathways**

### **Strengths**

Senior leaders and staff carefully consider the context of the school and local community when designing the curriculum

Children in P4 - P7 have regular opportunities to participate in physical education with children from other primary schools within their learning community and across Scotland.

Children from P1 to P4 participate in weekly music lessons delivered by a partner group of musicians. Children across the school can participate in music after school and through holiday clubs.

All children learn French as a modern language from P1 to P7. Children's learning is progressive, taking account of prior learning. In addition, there is a whole school focus on British Sign Language (BSL)

All children receive their full entitlement of two hours of high-quality physical education each week. Specialist physical education coaches provide engaging opportunities for children to learn skills in rugby, basketball and football. The Active Schools assistant works closely with teachers to deliver physical education lessons

Physical education and sports opportunities are supporting children to develop their confidence, resilience and create new friendships.

A progressive pathway for Religious Education (RE) that supports children to develop understanding of other faiths is in place.

### **Areas for improvement**

As planned, senior leaders should re-establish links with the local church to support religious observance across the school year.

### **Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement**

#### **Strengths**

Parents comment positively on the very caring, approachable and supportive school staff, referring to the strong community spirit.

Parents feel that staff really know their child as an individual and that their child is making good progress at school.

Senior leaders work strategically with a wide range of partners within the community to ensure parents and families access appropriate help and advice.

Overall, almost all parents feel the school is well led and would recommend it to other parents.

#### **Areas for improvement**

Parents welcome increasing opportunities to attend whole school events including STEAM and Reasons to Write.

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

#### **Strengths**

The Head Teacher and staff have a strong focus on supporting and improving children's wellbeing and resilience

Almost all children and parents are confident that children feel safe in school

Younger children have a very good understanding of the wellbeing indicators

Almost all children feel that staff teach them how to lead a healthy lifestyle.



Senior leaders have developed successful approaches to developing staff, children's, parents', and partners' knowledge and understanding of supporting wellbeing and resilience in the community.

The whole school community ensures inclusive opportunities are available for all, improving wellbeing and tackling health inequality

The Head Teacher has introduced effective approaches to check improvements in children's social and emotional wellbeing. There is clear evidence that almost all children are becoming more resilient learners.

Almost all children take part in regular activities beyond the classroom, showing increased confidence, attention and motivation.

The depute Head Teacher and School and Family Development Worker (SFDW) monitor children's attendance closely. They are proactive in addressing concerns and contact parents to offer support to help children return to school.

### **Areas for improvement**

All staff should continue to embed the language of wellbeing indicators in daily school life.

Improve attendance.

Align wellbeing interventions with attainment outcomes.

## **Raising attainment and achievement**

### **Strengths**

Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good.

Most children are on track to achieve expected attainment levels in literacy and English by the end of P4 and P7.

Most children are on track to achieve expected attainment levels in numeracy and mathematics by the end of P4 and P7.

Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy from their prior levels of attainment.

The quality of learners' achievement is a major strength of the school. Children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to achieve success within school

Senior leaders use PEF well to provide all children with support in health and wellbeing, STEAM, literacy and numeracy. Almost all children develop creativity skills well in each of these contexts.

The whole school community is developing a deeper understanding of the worth of every child and their families.

Almost all children are becoming more resilient learners, as a result of the focus on learning and achievement.

### **Areas for improvement**

Senior leaders (and staff) should continue to develop their use of the range of all available data, including attendance information

Further development of STEAM should provide more opportunities to apply mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Senior leaders should now support teachers to use this evidence more effectively to predict children's overall attainment at each level.

### **Quality of provision of Special Unit**

#### **Context**

The Enhanced Support Area (ESA) known as the Hub was inspected alongside the full school inspection. The improvement plan for the Hub has been incorporated into the revised whole school improvement plan.

**The report is available as part of the Summary of Inspection Findings at:**  
<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/find-an-inspection-report/find-an-inspection-report/details?id=2067>

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

Following the publication of the report in June 2023, the school has:

- Developed the School Improvement plan to reflect the recent findings of the Inspection report.
- Appointed an Acting Principal Teacher and reviewed roles and responsibilities (with her specific role focusing on Attainment, Achievement and Attendance monitoring)
- Developed an Outdoor Allotment Context in partnership with the local community.
- Developed a Textiles programme with local business.
- Developed a context in Esports through partnership with Dundee and Angus College.
- Been Awarded the Gold Sportscotland Award for Excellence
- Been Awarded the Reading Schools Award
- Been Awarded the Digital Schools Award

**Full details of the summarised inspection findings are available at:**

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/find-an-inspection-report/find-an-inspection-report/details?id=2067>

**Signed**



**Audrey May, Executive Director of Children and Families Service**

**Nicky Murray, Head Teacher Claypotts Castle Primary School**

6 June 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

In April 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Claypotts Castle Primary School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Claypotts Castle Primary School nursery class was inspected by Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months. Therefore, we have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection.

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

- A strong sense of community within the school contributes to a calm, safe and nurturing learning environment. Children are enthusiastic, motivated and engage well in all activities. They identify strongly with their school.
- The highly effective, caring leadership of the headteacher and depute headteacher. This is driven by their high aspirations for all children to succeed.
- The whole staff team ensures all children have many opportunities to achieve. They manage this through very effective partnership working.
- Parents are very positive about the difference the school is making to their children's lives.

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

- Develop further consistently high-quality approaches to learning and teaching to ensure all children are challenged in their learning activities.
- Develop further approaches to check children's progress in all areas of their learning. Senior leaders should now increase their focus on measuring children's progress over the longer term. They should use a range of information to ensure a clear picture of children's progress over time.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four quality indicators from [How good is our school? \(4<sup>th</sup> edition\)](#). 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 Claypotts Castle Primary School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	very good
Learning, teaching and assessment	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	very good
Raising attainment and achievement	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our school? (4<sup>th</sup> edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale</a>	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at: [Reports page | Inspection reports | Education Scotland](#).

### 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.

Victoria Morgan  
HM Inspector