

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 26 JUNE 2024

REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF DOWNFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE

REPORT NO: 195-2024

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 Downfield 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 Downfield Primary School was inspected by Education Scotland (HMI) in February 2024. Education Scotland published a report of their findings on 23 April 2024.

- 4.2 At the time of the inspection 315 children were on the primary school roll. 58.9% of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. 16.7% of pupils lived in the 40% least deprived datazones in Scotland.

- 4.3 The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Senior leaders and staff work effectively to create a caring and welcoming environment across the school. This is resulting in a calm ethos for children to be ready to learn.
- Friendly, motivated children who are keen to discuss their learning. They enjoy working with each other and are keen to lead aspects of the wider life of the school.
- Staff's effective work to develop the school's approaches to nurture and inclusion. Together they provide targeted and universal nurturing provision, which is increasing significantly children's readiness to learn, and is improving wellbeing outcomes and attendance.

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

- Continue to raise the attainment of all children at each stage across the school.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Develop the curriculum together with parents and partners, to reflect better high expectations for children's progress in all areas of their learning.
- Strengthen approaches to leading and monitoring change. This will help senior leaders and staff to develop important school improvement priorities at an improved pace.

- 4.5 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

- 4.6 The following quality evaluations were given at this inspection:

Quality Indicator	Downfield Primary School
1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and Inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Satisfactory

- 4.7 Appendix 1 provides a synopsis of the Summary of Inspection Findings and outlines key improvement activity to date. Appendix 2 includes the report issued to Parents/Carers.
- 4.8 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 and carers about the school's progress through Downfield Primary's Annual School Improvement Report.
- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 Downfield Primary School's School Improvement Plans (2024/25 and beyond) will reflect Education Scotland's findings and recommendations from the Summarised Inspection Findings which are attached. These will be regularly reviewed, monitored, and evaluated in line with quality improvement procedures.
- 4.11 Planned school improvement activity building on the school's identified strengths and addressing the areas for development include:
- Internal self-evaluation processes will be reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team and a more robust Quality Assurance calendar will be in place with agreed target dates.
 - School Improvement Partnership meetings and reciprocal visits will focus on the quality of learning and teaching and moderation activity.
 - Termly visits from link Education Officer will be in place for the session to ensure progress is being made and the pace of improvement is monitored closely.
- 4.12 As part of the Children and Families Service School Improvement Framework, quality assurance visits are made to the school by the school's link Education Officer to ensure the positive improvement journey continues and monitor the school's progress towards the action points raised in the inspection. The school's Self Evaluation and School Improvement Plans will include 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 have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with its content.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Audrey May
Executive Director

Paul Fleming
Head of Education, Learning and Inclusion

June 2024

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APPENDIX 1**Dundee City Council
Children and Families Service****Scrutiny Committee Report Summary Notes****Inspection and Reporting**

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	23 April 2024
Name of Establishment	Downfield Primary School
Sector	Primary
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Karen Emmett
Roll	309 primary children

Inspection Outcomes 2023

Quality Indicator	Primary Rating
1.3 Leadership of change	Satisfactory
2.3 Learning, teaching, and assessment	Satisfactory
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and Inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	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 April 2024

Key Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior leaders and staff work effectively to create a caring and welcoming environment across the school. This is resulting in a calm ethos for children to be ready to learn. Friendly, motivated children who are keen to discuss their learning. They enjoy working with each other and are keen to lead aspects of the wider life of the school. Staff's effective work to develop the school's approaches to nurture and inclusion. Together they provide targeted and universal nurturing provision, which is increasing significantly children's readiness to learn, and is improving wellbeing outcomes and attendance.

Areas for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to raise the attainment of all children at each stage across the school. Continue to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Develop the curriculum together with parents and partners, to reflect better the high expectations for children's progress in all areas of their learning.

- Strengthen approaches to leading and monitoring change. This will help senior leaders and staff to develop important school improvement priorities at an improved pace.

Synopsis – Summary of Inspection Findings

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the school's next Improvement Plan 2024/25 will reflect the recommendations 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

Overall, the work of senior leaders to develop the quality of leadership opportunities across the school is beginning to have a positive impact on both learners' experiences and on approaches to ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion for all children.

The headteacher and senior leaders worked with the school community to create the most recent school improvement plan (SIP) and the key priorities are linked well to areas where the school needs to make further improvements. Moving forward, the headteacher and staff need to develop more rigorous approaches to monitoring the impact and pace of this work.

Senior leaders and teachers are beginning to make positive improvements to enhance the quality of learning in lessons across the school and now need to involve staff more in leading and improving the overall quality of teaching, including gathering robust data.

The majority of staff take on or create regular opportunities to engage in high quality professional learning. Children have opportunities to develop their leadership skills and shape the work of the school such as the citizenship groups.

The Head Teacher consults regularly with the 'parent partnership' group which leads aspects of school fundraising and should now explore areas of where parents can lead meaningful contributions to improvement planning.

The Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plan and resource allocation are integrated well into the school's overall SIP and are shared with parents. The headteacher should now ensure that the PEF interventions supports key, measurable strategies to accelerate the progress of targeted groups of learners.

Learning, teaching and assessment

Teachers plan learning appropriately and collaboratively within stages. In a few lessons, children are clear about the purpose of learning and the specific intended learning and outcomes but activities planned by teachers are not always well matched to the learning intentions identified.

In most classes, teachers make regular use of assessment techniques to check for understanding and carry out standardised, summative and formative assessments which track children's progress and set targets. They use 'Feedback Friday' sessions effectively to have quality conversations with children about progress in learning.

Teachers should now develop more varied approaches to differentiation to ensure appropriate level of pace and challenge, affording pupils opportunities to lead their own learning and apply their skills and understanding in different contexts.

Senior leaders should also prioritise the improvement of approaches to developing and monitoring the quality of learning, teaching and assessment, including engaging in examples of highly effective practice nationally. This will help to ensure that all children make improved progress in their learning against national standards and expectations.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and Inclusion

Professional learning undertaken by staff has a positive impact on children and the whole school community. Their sound understanding of trauma-informed practice and nurturing approaches has resulted in children and families receiving effective support when facing challenges.

Children evaluate their wellbeing termly, using wellbeing wheels. Senior which are then used to plan and provide targeted support. The majority of children feel that they are treated with respect by their peers and that other children behave well.

Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide effective nurture support for targeted groups of children, including lunch time sessions and work very well with a range of multi-agency partners to meet children's needs. Children demonstrate increased social skills and emotional literacy in nurture provision and in their classes, as a result of attending nurture sessions. Staff continue to develop further universal inclusive supports in their classrooms and a schoolwide nurturing approach. As a result, there is a marked reduction of serious behaviour incidents. The headteacher and staff have also worked well to significantly reduce the number of occasions where exclusion is used.

Staff have increased the ways children and parents can share concerns about bullying behaviours, including using matrix barcode links. Senior leaders plan to revisit and develop further a shared understanding of anti-bullying education. They plan to support children to lead aspects of this work, including developing the role of 'anti-bullying ambassadors' to help build confidence and resilience in peer relationships.

Support Staff work well as a team to support the emotional, social and learning needs of children. They are familiar with children's individual learning plans, specific targets, attend Team Around the Child meetings and use their professional learning to promote positive relationships, learning and behaviour.

Raising attainment and achievement

Children across the school benefit from a variety of meaningful wider experiences which support them to engage in their learning.

Senior leaders use systems effectively to track children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing.

Data from 2022 and 2023 shows an increase in the number of children attaining nationally expected CfE levels.

Most children make good progress in listening and talking and satisfactory progress in reading and writing.

Most children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school, children need to regularly revisit and apply their numeracy and mathematics.

Most children, who receive additional support for their learning, make appropriate progress against their individual learning targets for literacy and numeracy.

PEF is deployed appropriately and senior leaders can evidence signs of positive impact of interventions as an increased number of targeted children are on track to achieve national expectations at their age and stage.

Children are proud of their own and others' achievements and celebrate these in assemblies and in class and they show a sense of confidence and pride in their contributions to the school and their community.

Staff use their local knowledge very well to identify families' and children's needs and address them sensitively. This helps to provide equity of opportunity and reduce financial barriers to participation.

Key activity to date has included the following:

- Engagement with the Local Authority's assigned Attainment Advisor to support all staff to analyse data effectively and inform improvement priorities which will, in turn, raise attainment and meet the needs of all pupils.
- Engagement with Dundee pedagogy team to review curriculum design and undertake moderation activities. This will support teachers to ensure their judgements about children's learning and achievements are robust across all curricular areas.
- Regular meetings with school's link Education Officer to review progress and monitor impact and pace of improvement priorities.

Next steps:

- Build on identified areas of strength within the school to provide more consistent high-quality learning and teaching across the school and ensure children are challenged appropriately.
- Undertake planned visits to schools within and outwith authority where highly effective practice has been highlighted.
- Involve parents more effectively in the work of the school.
- Work in partnership with the Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative (CYPIC) to develop writing at first level
- Continue to work with pedagogy to address key areas for improvement and to provide a bespoke curriculum relevant to the community.

Full details of the Summary of Inspection Findings are available at

<https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/find-an-inspection-report/find-an-inspection-report/details?id=2375>

Explanation of terms of quantity:

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All 100%
 Almost all 91%-99%
 Most 75%-90%
 Majority 50%-74%
 Minority/less than half 15%-49%
 A few less than 15%

APPENDIX 2



23 April 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Downfield Primary School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and children and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

Downfield 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.

- Senior leaders and staff work effectively to create a caring and welcoming environment across the school. This is resulting in a calm ethos for children to be ready to learn.
- Friendly, motivated children who are keen to discuss their learning. They enjoy working with each other and are keen to lead aspects of the wider life of the school.
- Staff's effective work to develop the school's approaches to nurture and inclusion. Together they provide targeted and universal nurturing provision, which is increasing significantly children's readiness to learn, and is improving wellbeing outcomes and attendance.

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

- Continue to raise the attainment of all children at each stage across the school.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Develop the curriculum together with parents and partners, to reflect better the high expectations for children's progress in all areas of their learning.
- Strengthen approaches to leading and monitoring change. This will help senior leaders and staff to develop important school improvement priorities at an improved pace.



We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using four 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 Downfield Primary School.

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Leadership of change	satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	satisfactory
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory
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: [Details](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Find an inspection report](#) | [Inspection and Review](#) | [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.

JohnPaul Cassidy
HM Inspector

23 April 2024

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JohnPaul Cassidy
HM Inspector

Summarised inspection findings

Downfield Primary School

Dundee City Council

23 April 2024

Key contextual information

Downfield Primary School was opened in 2008 and is situated in the Downfield and Kirkton area of Dundee. At the time of inspection, the roll was 315 children. The headteacher has been in post for eight years. She is supported by one deputy headteacher and one principal teacher.

In September 2022, 58.9% of pupils lived in the 20% most deprived datazones in Scotland. 16.7% of pupils lived in the 40% least deprived datazones in Scotland.

Downfield Primary school nursery class was inspected by the Care Inspectorate within the past 18 months, therefore, the local authority and headteacher had the option to include the nursery class as part of this inspection. We have agreed with the local authority and school that the nursery class is not part of this inspection. The findings set out below are for the primary school stages.

1.3 Leadership of change

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
- strategic planning for continuous improvement
- implementing improvement and change

- Across the school senior leaders and staff are working well to sustain a learning environment which is calm, purposeful and welcoming. The school's values are known as the 'Downfield PROMISE'. This underpins the school's values through 'Partnership, Respect for all, Opportunities, Mindset, Inclusive, Safe and nurturing and Education – being an excellent learner.' This is helping all staff to focus areas of the school's improvement work under agreed themes and is developing very positive relationships with partners and stakeholders. Overall, almost all children feel that staff show genuine care for their wellbeing, which has been the key focus of the school's improvement work in recent sessions. The staff team's well-planned interventions, such as the successful work around nurture and promoting positive relationships, are having a positive impact on children's wellbeing. This is also supporting children's willingness to engage in their learning.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are working well with the school community to create the most recent school improvement plan (SIP). The SIP currently has five key areas of priority. These priorities are linked well to areas where the school needs to make further improvements in its work to impact more positively on outcomes for all children. Moving forward, the headteacher and staff need to develop more rigorous approaches to monitoring the impact and pace of priorities for improvement within the SIP.
- Senior leaders and teachers are beginning to make positive improvements to enhance the quality of teaching in lessons across the school. These are underpinned by clear aims, for example, the current focus on the identified 'HITS' – 'high impact teaching strategies'. Senior leaders need to involve staff more in leading on improving the overall quality of teaching across the school. This should also include teachers gathering robust data to evaluate the impact of changes and overall quality of teaching. The headteacher has put in place a useful quality

assurance calendar which includes sampling children's work and progress over time. Senior leaders have regular dialogue with teachers to follow up on areas of strength following sampling of children's work and wider quality assurance.

- The majority of staff take on or create regular opportunities to engage in high quality professional learning. For example, a group of teachers is involved in the local authority 'Rising Stars' programme which develops teacher capacity towards formal leadership roles. Staff involved in this programme have led useful projects across the school which are directly linked to areas of the school's improvement planning. This includes the universal inclusive practice work and the school's tracking and monitoring project which is helping to address one of the their priority areas for improvement. A number of staff also take on informal leadership roles across the school. Senior leaders should now ensure that professional learning opportunities and collegiate time are more targeted at the school's highest priority areas for improvement. They should also monitor more rigorously the impact of linking professional learning and the school's ongoing work to improve.
- There are a number of impactful opportunities for children to develop their leadership skills and shape the work of the school. For example, the 'citizenship groups' led by children is leading key aspects of raising awareness around children's rights across the school. One of these groups has started to work towards achieving a nationally accredited award for rights-based learning. As a next step, senior leaders and staff should work with children to create meaningful opportunities for more children to develop their leadership skills and have a voice in shaping the life and work of the school.
- The 'parent partnership' has recently undergone changes to its membership. This group of parents leads aspects of school fundraising and they welcome that the headteacher consults regularly with them on key areas of improvement work. Almost all partners have also been involved in various aspects of the school's self-evaluation to improve. As a next step, the headteacher should explore with the 'parent partnership' areas of the school's improvement planning where they could lead meaningful contributions. The headteacher has consulted with parents about the school's allocation of the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The PEF plan and resource allocation are integrated well into the school's overall SIP. PEF priorities highlight effectively the school's plans to continue to support equitable opportunities for children who face potential barriers to accessing high quality learning experiences as a result of socio-economic disadvantage. The headteacher should ensure that the PEF planned allocation of resources supports key, measurable strategies to accelerate the progress of targeted groups of learners.
- Overall, the work of senior leaders to develop the quality of leadership opportunities across the school is beginning to have a positive impact on learners' experiences. This is impacting positively on approaches to ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion for all children. Senior leaders should also prioritise the improvement of approaches to developing and monitoring the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. Creating more opportunities for teachers to engage with examples of highly effective practice nationally in this area will help to improve the pace of this important area of the school's improvement journey. This will help to ensure that all children make improved progress in their learning against national standards and expectations.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- learning and engagement
- quality of teaching
- effective use of assessment
- planning, tracking and monitoring

- Senior leaders and staff have prioritised the development of a calm and inclusive ethos. This results in very warm relationships across the school which provides a supportive climate for learning. In almost all lessons, most children engage well in their learning and are motivated and eager to learn. They enjoy their learning activities.
- Children are beginning to understand well the positive relationships and behaviour messages underpinned by the school's Downfield 'PROMISE'. This set of school values is supporting well positive relationships and behaviour both in lessons and more widely around the school. Staff use the different areas of the 'PROMISE' to refocus and engage children in their learning and interactions with one another.
- Children are keen to contribute to their learning and participate well in giving answers to questions from the teacher. In a few classes, children become restless when teachers spend a significant amount of time talking or directing the whole class in a task. There is scope to increase the pace of learning in the majority of lessons. Children in P7 have had a greater input this session in planning their own learning through identifying their interests. This approach provides a promising basis on which pupil voice can be developed further to take more account of children's views about how they learn.
- Children work well in pairs and groups and would benefit from more varied approaches to differentiation. This would enable them to work on different tasks or outcomes which provide an appropriate level of challenge. Children would benefit from leading aspects of their own learning more often and from more creative and regular use of digital resources.
- Teachers in the early stages provide children with opportunities to learn through play-based approaches in the classroom. They should now work together to explore the national guidance to improve the quality of staff interactions with children. This would provide a continued opportunity for professional learning to help them improve their understanding and use of play pedagogy. The leadership team should ensure that all children, within the early stages, are making appropriate progress in their learning within the play environment.
- Support staff work effectively as a team to support the emotional, social and learning needs of children. They make effective use of professional learning to support learners through the provision of a range of interventions and the application of a range of approaches to promote positive relationships, learning and behaviour. Support staff make good use of time provided to familiarise themselves with children's individual learning plans and specific targets. They attend Team Around the Child meetings, making contributions about children's progress and next steps in learning.

- Children across the school benefit from a wide variety of meaningful experiences, including those supported by community partners, for example trips, visitors and competitions. These enrich the experiences of children and support them to engage in their learning.
- Teachers make effective use of questions to develop children's higher-order thinking skills in a few classes. Where learning activities are well-judged, feedback is more detailed and personalised and therefore more effective in supporting individuals. However, the quality of questioning, differentiation and effective feedback is variable across the school. Senior leaders should ensure that the strong practice in these areas is used to inform and develop professional practice across the school.
- Most staff use digital technology well to enhance children's learning. There are a few examples across the school of children making creative and effective use of digital technology. Staff should continue to develop their use of digital technology to enrich and support children's learning and to allow children to experience greater personalisation and choice. They should ensure that children's skills in digital literacy are developed in a planned, progressive way.
- In most classes, teachers make regular use of assessment techniques to check for understanding. Teachers now need to be clearer how they use information from formative assessment to inform next steps in learning for individual children. All teachers carry out standardised, summative and formative assessments. They use information from these to track children's progress and set targets which can be individualised or for groups of children. However, there is variation in how well teachers analyse this information in order to inform children's next steps in learning. Senior leaders and staff now need to ensure that planned assessments add value to the range of evidence gathered to demonstrate children's progress in learning. More opportunities for children to apply their skills and understanding in new contexts, and across the curriculum, would provide teachers with more robust evidence to make judgements about children's progress. Senior leaders and teachers should now develop a consistent approach to using data effectively to inform planning for learning, teaching and assessment.
- Teachers use 'Feedback Friday' sessions effectively to have conversations with children to discuss progress in learning. These support most children well to develop and use appropriate language to describe and evaluate their learning. Teachers should continue to develop the quality of these conversations to provide more detailed feedback to children on how they can progress their learning across all curriculum areas. Teachers should agree a consistent approach to identifying learning targets based on individual needs. This would help children to understand their own targets more clearly. Teachers should also revisit targets more regularly with children to continue to refine them and ensure they support children's progress in learning effectively.
- Teachers have recently focused on developing a shared understanding of national standards in listening and talking. Through this they demonstrate a clear understanding of the moderation cycle. Teachers engage effectively with stage partners and with their cluster colleagues on a well-planned basis to plan and evaluate learning in listening and talking. As a result, teachers are gaining confidence in making judgements about children's progress and understanding of standards to be achieved. Senior leaders should, as planned, ensure that teachers have opportunities to moderate learning, teaching and assessment across Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) levels in all curriculum areas. This will support teachers to ensure their judgements about children's learning and achievements are robust across all curricular areas.
- Teachers plan learning appropriately using a combination of CfE experiences and outcomes, local authority learning pathways and commercial programmes of work. Teachers work

collaboratively within stages to plan children's learning weekly. This enables them to share knowledge and understanding and to support one another. They identify national Benchmarks to plan for assessment effectively. In a few lessons, children are clear about the purpose of learning and the specific intended learning and outcomes. Currently, learning activities too often rely heavily on commercial resources and programmes. Activities planned by teachers are not always well matched to the learning intentions identified. Teachers should ensure that learning activities align more clearly with intended outcomes and specific skills or knowledge to be learned. This will support assessment information that is more focused and geared to inform next steps in learning.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders have identified the need to review the curriculum and should do this as a priority. They should consider how the context of the school can be reflected more clearly in the curriculum rationale and learning pathways. They should encourage teachers to be creative in developing learning pathways for all curriculum areas. It will be important to engage all stakeholders, particularly children, in creating the curriculum rationale and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum at regular intervals.
- Across the school children have two timetabled periods for physical education each week. Teachers should ensure that effective use is made of time so that children receive their full entitlement weekly. They should also review learning activities to ensure they are of consistently high quality for all classes.
- Teachers plan religious education using the Dundee City Council programme. Learning is supported well through the use of artefacts and visits to places of worship. Religious observance is supported through effective partnership work with Downfield Mains Church. Through this work, there are celebrations in school and the church at Easter and Christmas which support children's learning. Senior leaders and teachers should continue to develop religious education and observance in line with national guidance. This will support a broader understanding of how children's learning in diversity, equality and inclusion can be supported in a progressive way.
- A few children benefit from supportive outdoor learning experiences provided through local partnership working with Ancrum Outdoor Centre. Senior leaders have recently focused on providing resources to support outdoor learning in mathematics and numeracy. They should build on this positive start to continue to develop their plans for outdoor learning as a regular experience for all children, building on their prior learning experiences. This would also support the development of relevant and engaging contexts for learning.
- Senior leaders should review their approaches to embedding Scottish Government's 1+2 modern language policy to ensure that all children receive their full entitlement at all stages.
- Staff have recently refurbished and redesigned the school library with input from children about choice of furniture and layout. At present, individual children make use of the library regularly and classes access digital resources there. The school should continue to develop the use of the library as a weekly experience for all classes.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- All staff understand the importance of building positive relationships with their children and families and of improving wellbeing and reducing barriers to learning.
- Staff use an online approach to communicate with parents about their child's progress in learning. A minority of parents do not feel that this provides information consistently and would also welcome more advice on how to support their child's learning at home. The headteacher uses a school newsletter and social media to communicate to parents on a range of issues. However, a minority of parents feel that communication with the school could be better. The senior leadership team should work with parents to review how they can improve all aspects of school-home communications.
- The 'parent partnership' supports the school in fundraising ventures and are keen to encourage more parents to become involved. The school provides some opportunities for parents to engage in the life of the school through events such as 'Meet the Teacher' and 'Sharing the Learning' events such as art exhibitions. The headteacher should continue to identify opportunities for parents to engage in learning. This will help parents to understand better how they can support their child's learning at home.

2.1 Safeguarding

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- Staff demonstrate a deep professional commitment to supporting the wellbeing of all children. Adults' interactions with all children are positive, encouraging and caring. As a result, almost all children feel they have trusted adults in school they can talk to. Professional learning undertaken by staff has a positive impact on children and the whole school community. Their sound understanding of trauma-informed practice and nurturing approaches has resulted in children and families receiving effective support when facing challenges.
- Senior leaders hold regular assemblies that focus on health and wellbeing and children take part in special focus weeks throughout the year, such as mental health awareness week. Children evaluate their wellbeing termly, using visuals or diagrams to help. Senior leaders and teachers use this information well to plan and provide targeted support. A majority of children can talk or write about wellbeing indicators and how these relate to their lives at school, at home and in the community. Teachers should continue to develop children's understanding of wellbeing during health and wellbeing learning activities. This will ensure all children can communicate confidently about what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included.
- All children have opportunities to engage in a range of experiences to play, promote their physical development and get regular exercise. Most children can identify important features of a healthy lifestyle, for example, food choices and the importance of rest. Children speak about experiences tasting new fruits and about taking part in activities to help them feel calm. The number of children across the school involved in regular sports and physical activity out with physical education continues to increase. This is supported well by partners and organisations.
- A few children are strengthening important relationships through a 'Young Carers' group. This project is well led by teaching staff and partners. Children spend relaxed time together and enjoy creating displays and resources, such as comics and letters, to educate other children about the life of a young carer. As a result, they are increasing their sense of belonging and self-esteem, and enhancing their network of support through these experiences.
- Senior leaders are at the early stages of introducing rights-based learning to the school community. As planned, staff should provide opportunities for children to explore and learn about the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child. This will help children to develop an understanding of their own rights and those of others.
- The majority of children feel that they are treated with respect by their peers and that other children behave well. A few children and parents feel bullying is not always dealt with well. Staff have increased the ways children and parents can share concerns about bullying behaviours, including using matrix barcode links. Senior leaders seek children's views on

aspects of safety in school. This is supporting staff to identify areas of focus that are important to children, such as playground behaviours. Senior leaders should support the school community to revisit and develop further a shared understanding of anti-bullying education. As planned, they should support children to lead aspects of this work, including developing the role of 'anti-bullying ambassadors'. This will help children to discuss how they feel and develop confidence and resilience in peer relationships.

- Staff understand and apply their statutory responsibilities in relation to meeting the additional support needs of learners well. The school's approaches are embedded in legislation and national guidance. Staff are committed to removing barriers to children's learning and wellbeing, and ensuring learning and achievement opportunities are accessible to all.
- Staff commit fully to promoting nurturing principles and inclusion. Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide effective nurture support for targeted groups of children, including lunch time sessions. The principal teacher and nurture teacher manage this well-considered provision effectively and work very well with a range of multi-agency partners to meet children's needs. Children demonstrate increased social skills and emotional literacy in nurture provision and in their classes, as a result of attending nurture sessions. Staff continue to develop further universal inclusive supports in their classrooms and a school-wide nurturing approach. As a result, there is a marked reduction of serious behaviour incidents. The headteacher and staff have also worked well to significantly reduce the number of occasions where exclusion is used.
- Senior leaders carefully track the support provided for individual children who require additional support and monitor their progress across wellbeing and learning. They ensure children's plans are maintained and reviewed regularly with children, parents, relevant staff and partners. Staff should continue to ensure that targets set are specific and in small steps to better track children's success over time.
- The headteacher monitors regularly children's attendance at school and senior leaders have clear processes in place to review individualised and part-time timetables. They should continue to ensure part-time timetables are only in place for short periods of time. This should support children's reintegration to full-time learning at school as part of their support plan. Currently, the overall school figure for attendance is below the national average. For a few children, low attendance levels are adversely impacting their progress in learning and attainment. To address this, the headteacher has appointed a school and family development worker to help support children and families. This is beginning to help to remove barriers to attending school and there are early positive signs of impact.
- Children experience a range of learning activities which help them to understand and appreciate diversity through assemblies, class lessons and new library books. The school's strong, inclusive approach supports all children to feel they belong. Informative displays around the building and focused assemblies raise awareness of international campaigns, such as Black History Month. Children participate in projects such as 'Show Racism the Red Card' and mark a range of festivals and celebrations. In 2020, senior leaders and a group of children worked together to raise children's awareness of equity in education and reducing barriers to learning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) children and young people. The group also created an equalities policy for the school community. As a result of this work, they achieved the Youth Scotland LGBT charter award. Staff should now revisit and build on children's learning in a coherent and progressive way across levels. This will help children to develop further their understanding of their place in the world as a global citizen.

- The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and children. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of children through food in school. Several areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- attainment in literacy and numeracy
- attainment over time
- overall quality of learners' achievement
- equity for all learners

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

- In June 2023, most children attained nationally expected CfE levels in listening and talking. The majority of children achieved expected CfE levels in reading and writing. Most children achieved numeracy at early level by the end of P1 and the majority of children achieved at first and second levels at the end of P4 and P7 respectively.
- Most children, who receive additional support for their learning, make appropriate progress against their individual learning targets for literacy and numeracy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Most children make good progress in listening and talking and satisfactory progress in reading and writing.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children follow simple instructions. They are learning to take turns and listen and respond to others appropriately. Children will benefit from further practice in saying letter blends out loud. At first level the majority of children know what makes a good listener and listen to others and make an appropriate response. They are beginning to build on the contributions of others. At second level most children build upon the views of others and support others' opinions and ideas. A few children would benefit from further support to show respect for the views of others and to offer their own opinions with increasing confidence.

Reading

- At early level, the majority of children recognise and say single sounds. They use what they have learned to attempt to read simple words. They are beginning to use knowledge of taught sounds to decode and blend together to read unfamiliar words. At first level most children read aloud with expression. Children require regular practice to demonstrate their understanding of a text using appropriate comprehension strategies. The majority of children share their thoughts and opinions about characters, events and setting of a text. At second level the majority of children can discuss aspects of author's craft including word choice. Children will benefit from regular practice to identify and discuss features of language.

Writing

- At early level, the majority of children can draw a picture and attempt to write a simple sentence using marks and letter knowledge to convey information. Children can copy words and letters. They will benefit from exploring and playing with patterns and sounds in a range of imaginative and real-life contexts. At first level, children use simple sentence openers that state time and place. Children need to create extended texts regularly for different purposes and check to ensure their writing makes sense. At second level, most children use

knowledge of text type features to select appropriate forms of layout. Children understand how word choices affect the reader and include vocabulary that is suitable for the reader. Children require practice to write for a wider range of audiences and purposes. Across the school children need regular practice to edit their work and use taught punctuation independently and accurately.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, most children make satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. A minority of children have gaps in their knowledge of key number facts and mathematical understanding. Across the school, children need to regularly revisit and apply their numeracy and mathematics learning. A majority of children require practice setting out and presenting their work.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children correctly recognise, write and order numbers up to 10. They are becoming more confident adding and subtracting within 10 using concrete materials. At first level, the majority of children demonstrate their growing understanding of place value and rounding. They estimate how long an object is and measure it using appropriate instruments and units. Most children require further support with fractions and working out change when using money. At second level, a majority of children can apply their learning and skills in number and money to real-life contexts, such as budgeting. They are less confident working with percentages and calculating durations of time.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, almost all children recognise common two-dimensional shapes and create repeating patterns. They will benefit from developing further the language of position and direction. At first level, a majority of children identify and name three-dimensional (3D) objects and discuss their properties. At second level, a majority of children understand the relationship between 3D objects and their nets. Across first and second levels, children need to develop and practise applying their knowledge of angles.

Information handling

- At early level, children create pictorial displays of data collected. At first and second levels, a majority of children extract key information to answer questions about a range of graphs and charts. Across the school, children will benefit from regular practice collecting, organising and displaying data in meaningful, real-life contexts, including using digital technology.

Attainment over time

- Senior leaders use systems effectively to track children's progress and attainment in literacy, numeracy and wellbeing. Tracking information shows that the pandemic significantly impacted on children's attainment across the school adversely. Data from 2022 and 2023 shows an increase in the number of children attaining nationally expected CfE levels. Senior leaders and staff recognise that attainment needs to continue to improve across the school, particularly at early level. They identified gaps in children's learning, particularly in writing and reading. Senior leaders prioritised reading as an area of improvement and evidence shows positive impact on children's progress.
- Senior leaders track and evidence progress of cohorts and groups of children effectively. For example, most children with English as an additional language are achieving nationally expected CfE levels in reading and listening and talking. A majority of children who have experienced care achieve expected levels in reading and writing. Overall, children are capable of achieving more.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- Children are proud of their own and others' achievements and celebrate these in assemblies and in class. Children's self-esteem and confidence is increased through celebration of achievements within and out with school, for example, 'star of the week' and 'yellow letters'. A few children have shared their achievements representing sports at a national level, inspiring others through the 'champions wall'. Senior leaders track children's participation in achievements to prevent children from missing out. This is resulting in children improving their life skills through targeted interventions, for example, learning to ride a bike. Staff should support children to recognise and talk about their skills development which will enable them to identify the importance of preparation for careers and life beyond the school.
- The majority of children are developing confidence and achieving success through participating in 'citizenship groups' facilitated by staff. Children are demonstrating their capabilities as effective contributors taking the initiative and leading the groups. Children show a sense of pride in their contributions to the school and their community, including visiting senior adult residents and working alongside the 'sunshine ladies'. Children will benefit from further experience of contributing to their community in a positive way.
- Children are developing a variety of interests, talents and skills through a range of inputs led by staff and partners as part of the 'Downfield PROMISE'. Children are beginning to develop a wider range of new skills and staff should continue with their plans to extend their work with partners.

Equity for all learners

- Senior leaders track effectively the progress and attainment of groups of children with potential barriers to their learning. They identify gaps in children's attainment using a range of data and use this information well to plan targeted support for individuals and cohorts. Senior leaders deploy PEF appropriately to provide additional staff, resources and for professional learning. Senior leaders can evidence signs of positive impact that literacy interventions are having on children's progress in reading at first level. An increased number of targeted children are on track to achieve national expectations at their age and stage. Staff also provide wellbeing support for groups of children, such as nurture group provision and counselling through the counselling resources. These targeted interventions are helping children with barriers to their learning to grow in confidence and to improve their emotional wellbeing and readiness for learning. Senior leaders recognise they now need to use data to plan universal and targeted approaches to narrow the attainment gap in writing. As part of this work, senior leaders should monitor regularly interventions and approaches to ensure they are accelerating progress and improving outcomes for all children.
- Targeted PEF resources are geared towards developing children's emotional literacy and accepting disappointment. Other resources target identifying gaps in children's learning and development as part of the transition to secondary school programme. These resources are showing signs of benefitting children's willingness to engage in their learning and are improving the attendance of targeted groups of children. Staff monitor effectively nurture-based approaches using commercially produced resources and local authority created monitoring profiles for children.
- The headteacher has taken appropriate steps to reduce the cost of wider learning experiences and of the school day. These approaches to increasing equitable opportunities for all children have involved the support of the 'parent partnership' also. Staff use their local knowledge very well to identify families' and children's needs and address them sensitively. This helps to provide equity of opportunity and reduce financial barriers to participation. The headteacher

should continue to develop further approaches to addressing this important area in collaboration with the whole school community.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

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