

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

**REPORT ON: EDUCATION SCOTLAND (HMI) INSPECTION OF BARNILL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND EARLY YEARS CENTRE**

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

**REPORT NO: 230-2020**

## **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 Barnhill Primary School and Early Years Centre.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:
- i) notes the contents of this report; and
  - ii) instructs the Chief Education Officer to monitor progress towards meeting the areas for improvement outlined in the report.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

## **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1 Barnhill Primary School and Early Years Centre was inspected by Education Scotland (HMI) in February 2020. They published a report of their findings on 2 June 2020. At the time of the inspection 458 children were on the primary school roll and 82 children within the early years centre.
- 4.2 The school's current Head Teacher has been in post for 4 years. 2.4% of the school's pupils reside in deciles 1 and 2, 13.1% reside in deciles 1-3 and 97.6% reside in deciles 3-10 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. 4.4% of the school's pupil roll are 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 key strengths in the school's work:
- The strong leadership of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team who have a clear vision for the school and have undertaken a significant range of improvements during the course of recent years
  - The strong collaboration of the staff team who have established a shared standard of high expectations in relation to learning and teaching, resulting in very good attainment in literacy and numeracy
  - The well-developed knowledge of the staff of the school's social, economic and cultural context, ensuring that all school improvement priorities have a clear focus on equity to raise attainment and to address the attainment gap
  - The strong nurturing and inclusive ethos where children are happy, highly motivated and enthusiastic in their learning
  - The rich Nursery environment which inspires and stimulates children to be curious and engage in deep learning opportunities

- The very strong relationships with parents and partners who contribute to the school's positive approach to collaborative working to meet the pastoral and learning needs of children
  - The wide provision of opportunities for children to develop leadership, citizenship and digital skills.
- 4.5 Significantly, the Senior Leadership Team has ensured that the school vision and values ('BRILL' : Believe; Respect; Include; Learn and Achieve; Look After Each Other) reviewed in consultation with children and parents, is a widely evident feature which is impacting positively on school ethos and the quality of children's learning experiences.
- 4.6 The Head Teacher has used the school's Pupil Equity Funding wisely, prioritising the majority of the allocated funds to improve the quality of learning and teaching. As a result, the standard of teaching in most classes is very good, and in a few classes, it is excellent.
- 4.7 The Senior Leadership Team has established rigorous quality assurance approaches and staff are extremely motivated in their collaborative work towards school improvement.
- 4.8 Senior Leaders and teachers have very robust arrangements in place to monitor children's attainment and achievements. There is a clear focus on maintaining high levels of attainment over time, and overall, there is a positive trend with most children making very good progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy.
- 4.9 All staff have shared expectations on improving emotional resilience for all children. A range of approaches to ensure wellbeing, equality and inclusion are supporting children to have greater ownership in resolving issues and in improving their own health and wellbeing.
- 4.10 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the Head Teacher and representatives from Dundee City Council:
- The Senior Leadership Team should develop a whole-school staged intervention policy to ensure early identification of need for children with barriers to learning. A more streamlined approach would ensure improved outcomes for more children with additional support needs.
  - The Head Teacher has already identified further curriculum development as a priority. Plans to review the school's curriculum rationale involving parents/carers and pupils are already underway. A more consistent use of progression pathways would support further progress in learning within interdisciplinary contexts. Staff should continue to plan a learning pathway for Languages to ensure that all children access their entitlement to learn Modern Languages.
  - Senior Leaders and staff should review approaches to setting for reading and numeracy to ensure that all children's learning and wellbeing needs are fully met.
- 4.11 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

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

Quality indicators for the primary school	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Very good

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Very good

Quality indicators for the Early Years Centre	Evaluation
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
3.2 Securing children's progress	Good

- 4.13 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 Barnhill's annual School Improvement Report.
- 4.14 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.
- 4.15 Barnhill Primary School's School Improvement Plans (2019/20 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.
- 4.16 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
- 4.17 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 (2019/20) clearly articulates the areas for improvement 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 of Children and Families Service

Angela White  
Education Officer

June 2020



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

Inspection Agency	HMI
Report Publication Date	2 June 2020
Name of Establishment	Barnhill Primary School and Nursery Class
Sector	Primary
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Angela Bruce
Roll	458 primary children and 82 nursery children

**Inspection Outcomes January 2020**

<b>Quality indicators for the primary school</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
1.3 Leadership of change	Very good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Very good

<b>Quality indicators for the nursery school</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
1.3 Leadership of change	Good
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Very good
3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
3.2 Securing children's progress	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 June 2009**

<b>Primary School</b>	<b>Primary Class Rating</b>
Improvements in Performance	Good
Learners' experience	Satisfactory
Meeting learning needs	Good

<b>Nursery Class</b>	<b>Nursery Rating</b>
Improvements in performance	Good
Children's experiences	Good

Meeting learning needs	Good
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We evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school and nursery class.

School and Nursery Class	Primary Rating
The curriculum	Good
Improvement through self-evaluation	Good

The report uses the following word scale:

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

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

During the intervening period between the 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 February 2019

Key Strengths
The strong leadership of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team who have created a clear vision for the school community and successfully steered the school through significant improvements in recent years.
The strong collaboration of the staff team, their willingness to take on leadership roles and to work with a wide range of partners have resulted in very positive experiences and outcomes for children.
Children's attainment in Literacy and Numeracy is very good and attainment over time has shown a positive trend.
The strong nurturing and inclusive ethos in the Nursery and the Primary School supports children to be happy, highly motivated and engaged in their learning.

Areas for Improvement and Action
The Senior Leadership Team will plan to develop a whole-school staged intervention policy to ensure early identification of need for children with barriers to learning.
As identified in the School Improvement Plan, staff will progress with plans to further develop the curriculum, ensuring consistency in the use of progression pathways across all curricular areas, including Modern Languages.

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

Following publication of the inspection report and Summarised Inspection Findings, the School's Improvement Plan 2019/20 was amended to reflect the areas for improvement identified by Education Scotland 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**

The leadership team has refreshed the school vision and values of 'believe, respect, include learn and achieve, and look after each other' (BRILL) in consultation with children and parents. These have been an important feature in the creation of a positive school ethos. The leadership team has a clear vision for school improvement and has undertaken a significant range of improvements to the school over the last few years. As a result, the quality of learning and teaching in most classes is strong, and attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good.

The Head Teacher has used the Pupil Equity Funding wisely and prioritised much of the funds to improve the quality of learning and teaching overall. As a result, the standard of teaching in most classes is very good and in a few classes, excellent. The Head Teacher has been successful in developing a strong staff team who work collaboratively to establish the Barnhill shared standard for the quality of learning and teaching. This standard helps clarify high expectations and supports the drive for consistency in expectations across the school.

The leadership team has a rigorous quality assurance programme to ensure they monitor the quality of learning and teaching and measure the impact of improvements.

There has been positive impact of changes introduced across the school. Staff have a well-developed knowledge of the social, economic and cultural context of the school. This is helping to inform their approaches to equity and their understanding of the needs of children and families.

Staff are extremely motivated to work collaboratively towards improving the school. The majority of staff engage well with action research which they disseminate to other staff to secure improvements. The Head Teacher has prioritised improvement in the rigour and accuracy in staff's use of self-evaluation to help raise attainment. As a result, staff now have reliable information to inform the regular tracking meetings to review children's progress. They use this information well to identify an appropriate range of priorities and implement a range of interventions to raise attainment.

### **Learning, teaching and assessment**

Staff have worked well with the leadership team to articulate the Barnhill standard for the quality of learning and teaching. This provides staff with clear support and guidance on how to deliver high quality learning and teaching. As a result, teaching and learning across the school is of a very high standard.

Across the school, children enjoy learning, are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Children work well independently, in pairs and in groups. They feel that adults listen to them and seek their views and opinions. The junior leadership team supports staff in monitoring the quality of learning and teaching across the school. Children provide feedback to staff to help improve experiences in classes. This supports staff to create high quality learning experiences for children.

In most classes, the quality of teaching is very good, with a few examples of excellence. In almost all lessons, staff provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions which support children's learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to check understanding and build on prior learning. Increasingly, children have opportunities to exercise choice in their learning and engage in tasks which encourage creativity. Staff are well-organised and differentiate their teaching effectively. In doing this, they meet the needs of most children well. There is appropriate challenge for children in most lessons. Most staff use digital technologies effectively to enhance learning and children are increasing in confidence in sharing learning through digital technologies. Impressively, pupil digital leaders have created a digital learning action plan.

Teachers' assessments inform teaching and learning effectively. Most staff use assessment information well to identify interventions in learning and to plan next steps for learners. They are gaining confidence in analysing information and data from standardised assessments to identify specific needs and review approaches. Staff make good use of the National Benchmarks to support assessment and moderation across the majority of curricular areas.

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

The Barnhill vision (BRILL) is widely evident in Barnhill Primary School. Children recognise the positive impact the school vision has on their learning in the classroom and their friendships in school.

The recently introduced 'Relationships Blueprint' ensures all staff have shared expectations on improving emotional resilience for all children. Staff know children well and understand the needs of their families and the local community. Most children feel staff treat them fairly and with respect. Staff across the school support children with useful opportunities to discuss their health and wellbeing. Children with barriers to learning use the wellbeing indicators to identify areas in which they feel less confident.

Children in Barnhill Primary School contribute and influence the life and work of the school through a range of leadership groups. Opportunities which include House Captains, Eco Committee, Digital Leaders, P7 buddies and pupil-led lunchtime groups build self-esteem and leadership skills well in children. All staff have a good understanding of their role in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and their families. They participate in professional learning activities on children's mental health and nurturing approaches. This helps them to better understand children's needs and use appropriate strategies to support them.



The 'Beehive' classroom provides a welcoming safe base for children to access support and overcome barriers to learning. Parental feedback reports that this provision is especially effective in supporting children with transitions into school in the morning, and helping them to feel secure.

All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to statutory duties. They are very pro-active in addressing any concerns or issues that arise.

Attendance across the school is high and in recent years, there have been no exclusions. Most parents feel that the school deals with bullying effectively and almost all children are confident that they have someone to speak to about worries or concerns.

Children in the Respect Me team are working well to improve relationships and to promote a culture of respect.

The School Family Development Worker has strong relationships with parents which supports children and their families well. Staff use child plans, which focus on improving children's outcomes using the wellbeing indicators, to identify effective interventions. A Young Carers Support Group helps children to experience a range of enjoyable activities and to access useful help from outside agencies, which is resulting in them developing more confidence.

Barnhill Primary School is warm and welcoming and there is an inclusive ethos in all classes. All children participate in worthwhile community activities, which builds their citizenship skills well. For example, children share their learning with and entertain local residents at The Butterfly Café.

The school has made a positive start to developing children's understanding of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child.

### **Raising attainment and achievement**

Children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is very good and most children with barriers to learning are making good progress in their learning. Staff plan and moderate standards well through joint working within their stage partners and approaches to monitoring and tracking children's progress are sound. Consequently, most staff are accurate in their judgements on achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level.

Staff ensure children maintain high levels of attainment over time and have a clear focus on raising attainment. Overall, there is a positive trend with most children making very good progress in their learning in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and teachers have very robust arrangements in place to monitor data on children's attainment and achievements for reading, writing, talking and listening, and numeracy and mathematics.

### **Listening and Talking**

Children's attainment overall in listening and talking is very good. At the early level, almost all children listen and respond to cues appropriately. All children show enjoyment when listening to stories. At first level, almost all children listen well and respond confidently in group discussions. At second level, almost all children show confidence in communicating clearly and audibly in a range of different contexts. Almost all children across the stages contribute relevant ideas to discussions and justify their opinions with confidence. Children's skills in listening to each other and adults in social contexts and conversations is an important strength.

### **Reading**

Overall, children's attainment in reading across the levels is very good. Most children are making very good progress in reading. Across the school, a few children are exceeding national expectations. At the early level, most children read aloud familiar texts with good awareness of simple punctuation. At first level, almost all children read aloud a familiar piece of text with appropriate fluency and understanding. They can identify a favourite author and can explain reasons for their preferences of genres. Most children understand and answer confidently literal, inferential and evaluative questions with accuracy. At second level, almost all children read fluently with expression, linked to punctuation. Most are confident in talking about characters, setting, plot and reasons for choice of genre.

## **Writing**

Overall, children's attainment across the levels in writing is good. Most children are making good progress in writing and a few are exceeding national expectations. Across the school, children are developing well their skills in planning and writing for a range of purposes. At the early level, most children can form a meaningful sentence and punctuate appropriately. Most children are confident in using strategies to check spelling and apply their knowledge of phonics when attempting to spell new words. At first level, most children use with increasing accuracy, simple punctuation and common conjunctions to link sentences. They create texts for a range of purposes and audiences, with recognisable features of genre. At second level, most children write accurately in a range of genres. This includes writing about personal experiences, imaginative stories and poetry. Most children know how to use paragraphs effectively to organise ideas and themes and use an increasing range of punctuation accurately.

## **Numeracy and Mathematics**

Overall, children are making very good progress in numeracy and mathematics. The school's focus on improving conceptual development in number is supporting children's understanding of number concepts and processes. As a result, children are becoming increasingly confident to explain their mathematical thinking to each other and their teacher.

Across the school, children are developing their understanding of place value and number processes well. Children have a very good knowledge and understanding of number, money and measurement. As children progress through the levels, almost all are able to carry out key number operations accurately. Increasingly, children across the school are beginning to talk about using a range of strategies to carry out tasks mentally.

Children's knowledge and understanding of shape, position and movement is good across the school.

Full details of the Summarised inspection findings are available at:

<https://education.gov.scot/media/xsen21hw/barnhillpsncsif020620.pdf>

## **Signed**



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



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

**Angela Bruce, Head Teacher, Barnhill Primary School**

2 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In February 2020, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Barnhill Primary School and Nursery Class. 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 strong leadership provided by the headteacher and extended leadership team. Together with staff across the school, they work well as a team to lead and manage the pace of change very effectively. This is helping to maintain consistently high standards of attainment across the school and is empowering staff to lead and drive key aspects of improvement.
- The enthusiasm and commitment of all staff to undertake a range of professional research tasks. As a result, staff have created the Barnhill Standard for Learning and Teaching as a guide for all staff across the school. This is improving the quality of children's learning experiences, attainment and achievements in most classes.
- Very articulate, polite and well-behaved children who are very confident discussing their learning, their strengths and interests, as well as what they need to do to improve.
- The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Dundee City Council.
- Continue to ensure staff use progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum. This will provide clearer direction for teachers to support children to build on their learning as they move through the school.
- As planned, continue to improve further the arrangements for meeting the needs of all children.

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

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

Quality indicators for the nursery class	Evaluation
Leadership of change	good
Learning, teaching and assessment	very good
Securing children's progress	good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	good
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: <a href="#">How good is our early learning and childcare? Appendix 1: The six-point scale</a>	

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=1586>

### 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.

Sadie Cushley  
HM Inspector

