

Summarised inspection findings

Dean Park Primary School and Nursery Class

The City of Edinburgh Council

23 June 2020

Key contextual information

Dean Park Primary School and Nursery is situated in the village of Balerno near Edinburgh. The school has 476 children on the roll of the primary school and a further 79 in the nursery. The acting headteacher has been in post since August 2019. The school leadership team also includes a deputy headteacher, an acting deputy headteacher and an acting principal teacher.

1.3 Leadership of change

very good

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

- The acting headteacher has refreshed the school vision through consultation with children, parents and staff. The vision statement advocates, 'creating a learning environment where everyone has the opportunity to flourish'. The school's vision statement reflects well the aspirational values of fairness, opportunity and equity for all children. This vision underpins the aspiration of the school and the positive relationships which support children's work in school very effectively. Children understand and can demonstrate their awareness of this through their highly participative efforts in school activities and their celebration of success at assemblies in school. The acting headteacher and staff aim to refresh the school's existing values and aims of 'sustainability, citizenship, health and enterprise' after consultation with stakeholders.
- The school plays a central and active role in the village and community of Balerno. The children integrate very effectively into a number of the existing and supportive community groups. These groups create a context for inclusion and participation in community initiatives for the children.
- The acting headteacher is very well respected in the school and community. The acting headteacher is supported by a newly appointed leadership team which supports school initiatives and developments in key curricular areas very effectively. She encourages her staff team to work collegiately through high-level professional development. This work is increasing the pace of change of improvements in school resulting in new approaches for the children.
- The leadership team along with all stakeholders has created the 'Dean Park Learner' as an example of the high aspiration and commitment to lifelong learning which is applicable to the whole school community. As a result, all staff have a clear understanding of expectations of effective learning. The 'Flourish' acronym reminds pupils about the importance of 'Focus, Lifelong learning, Opportunities, Understanding, Resilience, (and being) Supported, Included and Heard.'
- The acting headteacher and staff continue to embed rights based learning across the curriculum. As a result, the school has recently been awarded its third Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award. This high-level achievement indicates the school's commitment to the children's understanding of the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and how it informs

their learning. Children enjoy performing their 'rights' inspired songs at assembly, choosing their 'right of the month,' and creating posters based on the UNCRC rights.

- All staff contribute to the life of the school with many teaching staff taking on additional professional qualifications. They are keen to improve the school through working with other colleagues in national development groups. A few staff take on whole-school responsibilities for leading on curriculum development and staff support each other well. As a result of staff efforts to improve their skills, the quality of teaching and learning in class is improving over time. All staff work collaboratively and are committed to bringing about improvement to the school. A few staff are involved in professional enquiry projects exploring issues in the school leading to improvements. Teachers are also developing ways to work effectively together as a team to share professional learning and expertise. Staff have improved approaches to teaching in areas such as, physical education, outdoor learning activities, early learning policy development and enhanced numeracy approaches.
- Teachers are confident in the use of digital technologies and use these skills very effectively to enhance teaching and learning experiences.
- Children have opportunities to develop leadership capacity through their involvement in the pupil leadership team (PLT), the pupil council, eco committee, rights rangers, junior road safety officers (JRSO) and the health and sport committee. Children discuss the school improvement planning priorities regularly at school assembly. Children in class are beginning to make use of 'How Good Is OUR School?' (HGIOURS) to support their role in school self-evaluation. They are developing leadership skills and learning to work cooperatively. Children contribute well to aspects of school life in these leadership roles. Staff should now support children to develop further their skills in leading their learning. Children at all stages are contributing to school improvement through membership of the pupil council, pupil leadership team and being in house groups. They value these opportunities and willingly undertake responsibilities that accompany these leadership roles.
- The acting headteacher and staff know their children well. They are aware of the socio-economic background of the school. They are supporting this knowledge by gathering and collating information to support children's progress. This data is shared with parents and teachers appropriately and used well to support decision making around individual children's next steps in their learning experiences.
- The senior leadership team (SLT) should continue further to increase opportunities for children, parents and partners to be involved in the school improvement process, and include children more regularly in the evaluation of the school's work.
- The senior leadership team and staff plan together. They should now develop refreshed systems to review teachers' plans and samples of children's work. The senior leadership team should review approaches to monitoring the work of the school and provide more frequent formal feedback to staff. Increased opportunities for professional dialogue with teachers will improve information gathering about how well children are achieving. The leadership team should continue to work further with staff to bring about raised expectations and attainment through regular professional dialogue. Staff are moderating standards of children's literacy and numeracy well. They are developing confidence in their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence levels of attainment along with partner schools. The development of new approaches and methodologies to support and enhance learning experiences is working well.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- A clear commitment to promoting children's rights underpins the ethos and culture of Dean Park Primary School. Class charters in every classroom promote a positive classroom climate and a culture of learning. This supports children well to be confident in their interactions with adults and peers. These develop children's citizenship skills well. The school should now provide further opportunities for all children to participate in leaderships roles. This will ensure all children have opportunities to participate fully and apply their skills in different contexts.
- Approaches to building resilience are helping children to develop positive attitudes to learning and motivating them in their learning. Useful emotional check-ins throughout the school day are evident in almost all classes. The school should continue to build resilience and support targeted children to ensure they learn alongside their peers. Staff and children use the shared understanding of the Dean Park Learner to develop personal learning plans and learning journeys. These are improving children's understanding of their own learning and helping them to plan their next steps. The school should use the Career Education Standard to include skills for life and work in these learning plans. This will support children to see the relevance of their learning and improve their understanding of the world of work.
- Children learn in a variety of ways during interesting and enjoyable experiences. School grounds and the local community support outdoor learning well. For example, 'Active Wednesdays' provide children with meaningful and engaging sporting activities. Community based activities such as the Balerno Village Screen provide children with the chance to apply their learning in real-life contexts. This is supporting them to become successful learners.
- Staff use technology well to enhance children's learning and develop their digital skills. Teachers make good use of digital technologies to support children with additional support needs and reduce barriers to learning. Children in the early years learn through play and experience a range of well-planned contexts for learning.
- The school's refreshed vision, aiming to support all children to flourish, underpins approaches to teaching well. Children learn independently, in pairs and groups and interact well with each other. Most children engage well with lessons and work purposefully when involved in challenging activities. A few children would like more challenge in their learning. Recent staff training on providing pace and challenge in lessons is supporting teachers to provide differentiated learning. This is not yet consistent across the school. Teachers should continue with plans to develop further their skills in meeting the needs of all learners. This will provide support and challenge for all children, including higher attaining children.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In most lessons, teachers set out what is to be learned and most children are clear about purpose of their learning. In a few classes, children co-construct steps to success with teachers very effectively. This deepens

children's understanding of their learning. In most lessons teachers' explanations are clear and staff use questioning well. This is supporting children in their understanding and extending their thinking. Staff should support children to formulate their own questions to develop their curiosity and higher order thinking skills. Pupil Support Assistants provide a good balance of direct support to individual children and wider support for learning. This contributes towards the good progress of most children, including those with barriers to learning.

- Teachers make good use of an increasing range of assessment approaches to determine children's progress and achievement of a level. This includes summative assessments, on-going class assessments and a range of self and peer assessments. The school should continue as planned to use the Scottish Standard National Assessments diagnostically to gather and use data to identify next steps for learning. In most lessons, staff make use of formative assessment strategies well to check for understanding and make appropriate interventions. Moderation activities within the school and across the local cluster are supporting staff well to develop confidence in their professional judgements. As identified by senior leaders, the school should continue to develop their strategic assessment model to ensure that assessment is integral to planning across all curricular areas.
- Teachers plan collaboratively across stages to ensure children receive a breadth and range of experiences. They plan activities to ensure they are matched appropriately to most learners' interests and needs. Children contribute to planning by providing their 'big questions' at the start of topics. This provides children with good opportunities to personalise their learning.
- The school is tracking wider achievement using the local authority tracking system. Systematic tracking of children with barriers to learning ensures that timely interventions for support are put in place. The SLT has recently developed a tracking system which is beginning to support all staff to gather a range of data. This is used to identify attainment gaps and plan interventions well. As planned, the school should continue to measure the effectiveness of these interventions to ensure they add value to children's progress.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have created a curriculum rationale based on the school values and focuses on promoting citizenship, ecology, enterprise and health. There is a growing commitment to promote children's rights and pupil voice through the curriculum. There are strong links with the local community. Staff should now refine the rationale with the involvement of children, parents and local organisations. This should ensure that learning contexts are relevant to the school's local and national setting.
- Staff use a framework for progression for numeracy and mathematics based on experiences and outcomes and the National Benchmarks. This includes 'Dean Park Counts', a progressive programme for mental agility. This provides differentiated routes for progression of skills in numeracy. The 'Pupil Journey' ensures breadth of curriculum coverage across all curriculum areas. Staff should now develop this further to include pathways for all curriculum areas that focus on progression of skills.
- The schools 'Big Ideas' initiative provides integrated learning opportunities for children linked to the local community and working with local partners. These include productive links with Friends of Pentlands, the Village Screen and Balerno Village Trust. This provides contexts for outdoor learning within the school grounds and in the local community. Staff should develop further approaches to outdoor learning to provide year-long progressive experiences across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders and staff should review the programme for interdisciplinary learning to support the delivery of all curriculum areas in a planned and progressive way. This should provide more relevant contexts for learning based on the school's unique local and national setting.
- All children have opportunities to develop effective digital skills. The 'Pupil Journey' identifies contexts for learning digital skills at each stage. Staff should develop a pathway that clearly defines the skills children are developing in a progressive way as they move through the school.
- Senior leaders and staff are developing approaches to relationships, sexual health and parenthood (RSHP) working with NHS partners and parents to develop appropriate pathways and supports for the children at school.
- The school focuses on Developing the Young Workforce through events such as 'Enterprise Fortnight' and the Pupil Leadership application process. Parents are invited on occasions to share their career experiences. As a school, staff need to develop a more structured approach to developing skills for learning, life and work that provides for planned learning in line with the Careers Education Standards.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Staff have developed strong partnerships working with partner agencies and parents. They have established partnerships that promote inspiring opportunities and experiences for children. Staff should further develop this work to involve more parents in their children's learning.
- Staff communicate with parents well through newsletters and social media. Parents are happy with the communication from the school and most parents feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions they may have. Parents would welcome further information which will help them better support their children at home.
- The Parent Council and Parent Teacher Association have been proactive in providing after school activities and have been actively involved in organising community events. By involving parents more proactively in the school improvement planning process, and increasing parental engagement in children's learning, the school will be better able to demonstrate the impact of their partnership on children's learning experiences.

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 has been agreed with the school and the education authority that needs to be addressed as a matter for urgency.

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

- The school has a well-developed culture where all staff work together to promote health and wellbeing. Under the leadership of the acting headteacher, all staff prioritise the social and emotional wellbeing of children as a key feature of them being able to learn effectively. There is increased awareness of emotional self-regulation for children which helps them deal with their feelings and emotions in the course of the school day.
- Most children feel valued, safe and happy in their school. Children, parents, staff and partners are very positive about the strong sense of community which they see as a characteristic of school. The SLT, all staff and the community support children and families very well through their organisation of thrift shops, foodbanks, free fruit and financial support for school excursions. All staff are welcoming, caring and sensitive to children who may need help with every day school necessities.
- The school makes effective use of its environment and local community to support the social and emotional wellbeing of all children. A strong commitment to sport and activities, outdoor education and outdoor learning supports the whole school approach to health and wellbeing. This is highlighted by the SportsScotland Gold School Sports Award. Children benefit from participation in a range of after school clubs and community activities which promote citizenship, active participation, social skills and physical activity to support their development. Active learning approaches and daily physical activity provide stimulating and supportive contexts in which children can understand and improve their sense of wellbeing.
- Children grow confidence singing in the school choir and extend this activity into the community. Through a variety of clubs organised by the staff and partners, most children are increasing their interest and active involvement in healthy activities. These activities are making a significant contribution to children's overall health and wellbeing. For example, the girls' football team effectively targets and supports physical development and games skills for a number of children who play regularly. A lunchtime, pupil-led debating club, is well attended by children at the Primary 5 stage. This is improving their confidence to participate and develop listening and talking skills.
- The headteacher and leadership team are developing a strategic approach to improving health and wellbeing for children and staff. They are beginning to take this work forward supported by the use of 'How good is OUR school?' (HGIOURS.) As a result of this, aspects of health and wellbeing are improving across the school. Children are becoming more fully involved with school activities, more participative in leadership roles and developing a wide range of skills. Children are confident and able to talk about their learning around being physically active and the importance of a balanced diet. They recognise their own emotions and mental wellbeing and have learned strategies to use to protect themselves when they are feeling upset or

vulnerable. They feel confident that they can discuss issues with a trusted adult and that they would be able to find a way to cope in such situations.

- The main duties under the Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007, to promote the school meal service, ensure access to free drinking water and ensure those entitled to a free school meal are not openly identified, are being met.
- The nutritional analysis of the planned menu provision shows all standards are being met.
- Most children are familiar with the wellbeing indicators but do not as yet discuss them in relation to their everyday experiences of school or use them to evaluate their wellbeing. Staff know all children and families very well and should continue to develop effective procedures to identify needs as they arise and address them successfully. Children who have additional support needs are identified and supported by additional staff. These strategies should continue to be reviewed to allow children and their parents to agree on ways to address any barriers to learning. These strategies should also be reviewed regularly and their impact evaluated. This will ensure that all children make positive progress in their learning.
- All staff understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to statutory duties. Relevant school policies take good account of guidance on staged intervention from Edinburgh Council. Effective monitoring arrangements by senior leaders and termly progress discussions with staff inform the effective support provided for children who require it. The leadership team carefully considers appropriate interventions and designs individualised support programmes where needed. A few children should be supported more to know what they need to do to be more successful in their learning.
- Provision for religious and moral education (RME) and religious observation (RO) is in line with national advice. A programme of assemblies supports the celebration of the school vision and encourages children to reflect on wider social and global issues. Children plan and lead acts of RO such as the harvest festival, as part of larger planned programme. This supports them to consider their own experience in light of deeper questions about meaning, value and purpose in life.
- Senior leaders and staff are aware of the need to ensure all children have a developed understanding of diversity and equality. Their approaches to this include a highly successful, pupil led 'wonder week' where children invite differently abled speakers to tell them about themselves at assemblies and about the particular barriers they experience. This supports a greater appreciation of the barriers to learning faced by some. The school should continue, as planned, to explore further ways to embed learning about diversity and equality across all areas of the curriculum.
- The Acting Headteacher understands the fundamental role played by children's rights in education and rightly makes this the lens through which staff and stakeholders view health and wellbeing. Across the school, children have a strong awareness of rights and recognise how they inform the vision and aims of the school. The school has achieved their third successive Gold Rights Respecting Schools award.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

good

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

- Data was provided by the school on children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for 2018-19. This showed that almost all children in P1 and P7 achieved appropriate levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy. Most children by the end of P4 achieve appropriate levels in reading, writing and numeracy, with almost all achieving the appropriate level in listening and talking. We agree with the school's attainment data for literacy and numeracy.

The school is aware of the need to raise attainment across first level. Staff have identified gaps in learning and have taken steps to address these. As a result, there are improvements in progress. However earlier identification of gaps in attainment would ensure more consistent progress from early into first level.

Literacy and English

- Overall, attainment in literacy is very good and children are making good progress.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, almost all children are very articulate. At the early level, children listen well to instructions and share their views appropriately. At first level, almost all children can discuss the main ideas of spoken texts, share ideas and build on the ideas of others. Almost all children can recite Burns' poetry in National competitions and have a clear understanding of how pace, gesture and expression can engage an audience. At second level, almost all children contribute very well to discussions and can build on the ideas of others and justify their opinions on a range of topics.

Reading

- The school has a well - stocked library and children use this to borrow books and read for enjoyment. At early level, almost all children talk confidently about stories and books. Children working within early level can read simple texts and the majority of children use decoding strategies. At first level, children can identify the features of non-fiction texts and use this knowledge to locate key information. At second level, almost all children read a wide range of texts fluently. Most children choose challenging texts including audio books and can explain their preferences for authors and genres with relevant detail. Most children can answer a wide range of literal and inferential questions to demonstrate their understanding of texts. Children need to develop skills in creating questions for others about texts. This will develop and challenge their higher order thinking skills.

Writing

- Across the school, almost all children write for a variety of purposes. At early level, all children are writing regularly in a variety of teacher and self-directed activities. Most children understand

the sounds letters make and use these to create words. A few children write independently using capital letters and full stops. At first level, most children enjoy writing tasks. Story mountains support children well to structure stories and organise their ideas appropriately. Most children use the features of language well to write persuasive texts and punctuate sentences properly. At second level, most children use their knowledge of figurative language to create poems with appropriate descriptive language. Across the school, teachers should set consistent high expectations for spelling and presentation of written work in jotters and displays. This will encourage children to produce their best work at all times.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are achieving appropriate levels at early and second level. The majority of children are achieving well at first level.

Number, money and measure

- At early level, most children are confident in adding and subtracting single digit numbers within ten, and complete number patterns to 20. A few children apply their knowledge of the number bonds to numbers up to 30 and beyond. At first level, most children partition confidently whole numbers to 1000. A few identify the value of digits in whole numbers of five or more digits. Most solve accurately addition and subtraction problems with three digit numbers. They are less confident in applying their skills in telling the time in different ways. At second level, most children multiply accurately whole numbers by two digit numbers. They use their knowledge of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages well to solve problems. Most apply their knowledge of area and perimeter to simple problems.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children identify two-dimensional shapes. They can describe simple properties of three-dimensional objects. Most children at first level are confident in using geometric terms to describe the properties of a range of three-dimensional objects. They follow accurately mathematical directions associated with direction and turning. Most children at second level use correct mathematical language to classify a range of angles. At all stages, children need to consolidate and apply their learning in shape, position and movement.

Information handling

- At early level, most children gather information effectively and interpret simple charts well to answer questions. Most children at first level present information accurately using pictograms and bar graphs. Most children at second level construct trend graphs accurately to present information from given sources. Children at first and second level need more experiences to develop their information handling skills in real life contexts. They need to develop their skills in using digital technology to organise and display data.

Attainment over time

- Overall, there is an improving trend with most children making good progress and a few making very good progress from prior levels of attainment. The school provided data for children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels for the last three years. It indicates that, over that period, most children have consistently achieved appropriate levels in literacy and numeracy. The school has introduced a system to collate and analyse data to strengthen tracking and monitoring of attainment over time. This information reflects teachers' improving understanding of expectations and draws on a wider range of assessment evidence.

- For children requiring additional support, interventions to overcome barriers to learning are based well on the school's detailed tracking of individual children. These children are making good progress in their learning over time as a result.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- Children are proud of their individual and collective achievements. They talk positively about their contributions to the school gaining national awards including the 'Rights Respecting Schools Gold Award' and 'School Sports Gold Award'. Achievements are celebrated well at school assemblies, through social media and within the 'Little Red Book' belonging to each class.
- There is a wide range of planned opportunities for children to develop the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence. These include clubs led by pupils, staff, parents and partners, pupil decision-making groups and local and global citizenship activities. Children are proud of the contribution they make to the life of the school, their local community and the wider world through participation in these activities. They have a good awareness of the benefits they are gaining for themselves and the difference they are making to others.
- Children are at an early stage of identifying the skills and attributes they are developing through participation in the wider life of the school. The school has begun engaging with the local authority's system to track wider achievements. Senior leaders and staff should ensure that approaches to tracking achievement enable children to profile and reflect on the skills they are developing. They should ensure that all children have the opportunity to influence the life and work of the school. This will allow all children to develop effective citizenship and leadership skills.

Equity for all learners

- Staff have a good awareness the importance of ensuring equity for all children in the school. The school offers clubs to include children experience barriers to participation in community clubs and activities. 'The Breakfast Club', 'Soft Start' and 'Flow', successfully support children who experience challenges in coming to school.
- Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) has been used to support a second level numeracy inclusion programme. Early evidence indicates some improvements in the progress of learning for targeted groups of children. It will be important to continue to monitor the impact of this funding in closing gaps in attainment for all targeted children.

An aspect of school empowerment: Partnerships

- There is a supportive and empowering culture of improvement at Dean Park Primary School. Senior leaders build trust and encourage collaborative working throughout the school community. Teachers comment that they are supported well by senior leaders and that teamwork is strong across the school. Staff volunteer to join working groups to influence school improvement priorities. These are led by teachers and include groups for ICT, numeracy, literacy and health. Community partners comment positively on their ongoing links with the school and their part in leading initiatives that benefit children.
- Senior leaders encourage parental involvement in school life. Parents were involved in a recent catchment review. Parents take an active role in recruitment of staff.
- The school has placed a high priority on empowering children to begin to lead their learning and influence the wider life of the school. All children have regular learning conversations with their class teacher and senior leaders about progress and next steps. All children were involved in the creation of 'The Dean Park Learner', which is empowering children to take ownership of their learning. Children play an active role in the recruitment of staff. They lead initiatives to contribute to the local community and international initiatives. These include the running of the 'Balerno Village Screen' film show and active involvement in Balerno Fair Trade Week. As a result, they are having a positive influence on the wider life of the school. Children contribute actively to the school improvement plan through the Pupil Council, Health and Sport Committee and 'Rights Rangers'.

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.