

# Summarised inspection findings

**Barsail Primary School**

Renfrewshire Council

8 November 2022

## Key contextual information

Barsail Primary School is in the town of Erskine, in Renfrewshire. The school has 317 children, organised into 13 classes. A third of children attend Barsail Primary as a result of placing requests. The headteacher has been in post since August 2018. She is supported by a depute headteacher and a principal teacher who she appointed shortly after taking up post. Previously they had all been members of staff at Barsail Primary. This session both the depute headteacher and principal teacher have part-time class commitments.

The socio-economic profile of the school is split fairly evenly across Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 4-6 and SIMD 8-10.

### 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

- Barsail Primary School has a strong sense of community where all staff care deeply about children in their care. They put children's emotional and social wellbeing at the heart of all they do. All staff demonstrate a strong commitment to school improvement and do their best for all children. Children learn and thrive in a happy, calm environment where all adults support them well.
- The headteacher provides highly-effective leadership for the school community. She is well supported by the depute headteacher and principal teacher. The headteacher's energy, enthusiasm and determination motivate and empower staff and the wider community to improve outcomes for all children. Their aspirational vision, 'Dream Big, Aim High, Achieve More' is the result of wide consultation and reflection across the school community. All staff have consistently high expectations of children.
- Barsail Primary School's values of honesty, empathy, ambition, respect, teamwork and success (HEARTS) are reflected strongly in the positive culture of the school community. All children, parents, partners and staff commit wholeheartedly to demonstrating these values in all actions. They refer regularly to the values in discussions. They are involved fully in the ongoing review of the difference the values make. They have embedded the HEARTS values successfully in the life and work of the school, as a result. Parents share that children show the values out with school and are developing important skills for learning, life and work. The high quality work promoting a consistent approach to developing positive relationships translates the vision, values and aims into reality. The school community makes highly-effective use of these values and aims to support improvement and recovery from the impact of COVID-19. The school's vision and values provide a clear sense of direction and purpose.
- The headteacher has established a strong staff team. The team works well together and is committed to continuous improvement. Senior leaders and teachers identify priorities for improvement through effective, evidence-based self-evaluation. Teachers identified a need to

continue to improve the consistency and quality of learning and teaching. As planned, staff should now focus on improving approaches to assessment and moderation to continue to improve the accuracy of teacher professional judgements. The current school improvement plan reflects this and has an appropriate focus on developing approaches to assessment and moderation. All staff are involved in evaluating progress in areas of improvement.

- Staff speak positively about opportunities to engage in professional learning. They are keen to learn from others to make sure they continue to refine and improve practice. The principal teacher works highly effectively with psychological services to identify and develop priorities to support improvements in social and emotional wellbeing. Together they lead professional learning in this area within school. This work underpins the highly-successful approaches to developing and promoting positive relationships at Barsail Primary. All staff have developed appropriate skills and use these successfully to support children's social and emotional wellbeing. They have created an inclusive approach to teaching and learning as a result. All staff reinforce this inclusive approach in the respectful and encouraging interactions they have with children at all times. The principal teacher, with the support of psychological services, shares good practice across the local authority. This is the result of the positive impact of this successful development at Barsail Primary School.
- The quality of leadership across the staff team is a key strength. Senior leaders inspire and motivate staff to prompt change. They empower all staff to take on additional leadership responsibilities. Senior leaders trust teachers to investigate an area of personal and professional interest to seek ways to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Teachers' investigations into teaching writing and learning outdoors led to improvements in outcomes for children. The results of these investigations are beginning to shape school improvement priorities. The headteacher should continue to develop a strategic overview of the range of individual teacher investigations to ensure that these align with school improvement priorities to improve outcomes for all learners.
- Children at all stages contribute to school improvement through leadership of school groups such as the pupil council and eco group. They talk enthusiastically about their views being sought and acted on particularly when they meet with senior leaders for a 'Barsail Blether'. Children make significant contributions to the development of the school environment, learning important life skills such as teamwork and budgeting. Parents and partners contribute their views about areas for improvement and help shape the delivery of the curriculum.

## 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

very 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

- Staff create a nurturing ethos and culture in Barsail Primary School. The nurturing ethos and culture are highly evident in interactions between children and staff throughout the school. They underpin successfully approaches to teaching and learning in all classes. All staff and children use the vision and values well to build and sustain positive relationships with each other. Children understand their rights clearly. Staff explore with children the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child showing their strong commitment to rights-based teaching and learning.
- Almost all children contribute to the wider life of the school community in meaningful ways which help them experience success. Staff identify that during COVID-19, children had fewer opportunities to share class resources and spaces due to safety restrictions. As these restrictions eased, staff have focused on developing areas that support group work. Children are developing the open area of the upper school as part of a budgeting project, for example. This involvement develops confidence, independence and skills for learning, life and work well.
- Teachers provide children with opportunities to work in groups, pairs and independently in all classes. Children focus well on tasks and activities. They are active and responsible when leading learning and supporting others. For example, 'resident experts' support children to make full use of digital technology during numeracy and mathematics activities. This helps them to identify as successful learners and have confidence to tackle new learning. Almost all children have relevant opportunities to shape learning activities based on their interests. Children influence the area of focus in social subjects and suggest 'Big Questions' to debate during talking and listening activities. In all classes, children are highly engaged in their learning, as a result.
- Staff tracked children's engagement in learning carefully during home learning periods. As a result, they identified quickly those children not engaged fully in their online learning. Staff responded quickly by making direct calls to families and delivering learning materials to support continuity in learning for children.
- Teachers develop class environments to enhance nurturing approaches. These environments support the wellbeing of individual children well. Children enjoy accessing the quiet zones in classrooms to help calm and focus their minds ready for learning. At the early stages, teachers continue to develop their approaches to support children learn through play. A few experiences give children the opportunity to extend their independent learning. During these experiences teachers support children's learning well with high-quality questioning and interactions. Senior leaders and staff should continue to use national guidance as they develop play pedagogy further. All staff use outdoor spaces creatively to support children to work collaboratively. Children take part enthusiastically in educational outings to enrich

learning. P4 children attended a local careers fair to talk and learn about different jobs. They enjoyed further discussions about future occupations upon return to school. The indoor and outdoor environments support children well to enjoy experiences and access learning.

- All teachers plan learning using the Barsail Learning and Teaching Core Practice Guide. This guide is supporting them to consider more carefully the features of high quality learning and teaching. Almost all teachers explain new concepts clearly and share the purpose of lessons well. Most teachers provide experiences and activities which meet the needs of most children effectively. A few children across the school would like their work to be more challenging. All teachers should continue to work together to develop consistent approaches to high quality learning and teaching. In particular, improving approaches to effective questioning will develop children's thinking skills and provide them with further challenge.
- All teachers incorporate digital technology into all aspects of learning successfully. All children use matrix barcodes frequently as a tool for learning. This helps them to access appropriate activities to meet their individual needs which is encouraging them to become independent learners. Children go independently to the quiet zone where they use barcodes to access a range of activities to help them manage their emotions. Children enjoy capturing, sharing and celebrating class work with families using an online platform.
- Children set targets in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing every term. They explain that targets help them to reflect on next steps in learning and achieve success. Teachers should continue to discuss targets with children to help children reflect more deeply about the skills they are developing. These reflections will help children set appropriate, individual targets that will help them to achieve. Teachers could link these learning conversations to 'Barsail Blethers' to support target setting further.
- All teachers use assessment tools effectively to help inform their judgements about children's progress and attainment. This includes standardised tests and in-class assessments. Almost all teachers work together to assess children's work. This helps them agree shared standards of what children can achieve. The quality of teachers' judgements would be strengthened further by increasing opportunities for children to use skills in new and unfamiliar situations. Teachers should use National Benchmarks more to plan assessment and identify the next steps in children's learning across all curriculum areas. Teachers have recently restarted moderation activities with other schools. This work will help them develop further their shared understanding of children's attainment and achievement.
- Teachers meet with stage partners weekly to plan children's learning. They use a clear system to identify and support children who may face barriers to learning as a result of financial hardship. Teachers work closely with colleagues funded using the pupil equity fund, to plan interventions and support where needed. Senior leaders and staff identify the need to update the current health and wellbeing planning to reflect recent improvements to the health and wellbeing curriculum. In other curricular areas, teachers use a range of different planning pathways and formats. Senior leaders acknowledge the benefits of developing consistent approaches to planning and assessment across all curricular areas.
- Teachers use data well. They gather information from assessments regularly to check children's progress and achievement in literacy, numeracy and health wellbeing. Senior leaders and teachers use this information combined with their detailed knowledge of children to follow children's progress closely. All staff make sure that difficulties children have with learning are identified promptly. They put appropriate measures in place to provide support. They check regularly that planned support for children with additional support needs is making a difference.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Teachers make effective use of current planning pathways for all curricular areas. They plan creatively and responsively to meet the needs of children well. Literacy and English and Numeracy and Mathematics pathways take appropriate account of prior learning. These pathways provide appropriate progression in learning. Senior leaders and staff are beginning to develop more consistent and manageable approaches to learning pathways across all curricular areas to provide greater clarity, especially for new members of staff.
- Teachers follow planned programmes in French and music to ensure that children build on prior learning. Children enjoy learning the French language. They use short words and phrases very well. In music, children are developing their confidence well in singing, playing instruments and expressing their thoughts on a range of music. All children receive two hours of planned physical education each week.
- Staff provide engaging opportunities for children to use digital technologies across all areas of the curriculum. They have built successfully on the positive use of digital technology during COVID-19. Children complete homework tasks using an online platform and enjoy the choice and challenge in activities provided. Children and staff are proud of the Digital Schools Awards which they received last session.
- All staff and the Assistant Active Schools coordinator work well together to make purposeful use of the outdoors. Learning outdoors enhances the curriculum by providing a valuable setting for children to apply skills from all other curriculum areas. Children apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in other curriculum areas while in the outdoor environment. Staff should build on this approach to increase children's opportunities to use their skills in new situations. Outdoor learning supports children to get on well together. All staff continue to focus on outdoor learning to develop children's teamwork skills and resilience.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Parents highlight the positive relationships that exist across the school community. The quality of relationships results in children being happy and enthusiastic about school.
- Parents comment that relationships improved further during the pandemic experience. They value highly the quality of communication made possible by an online platform. This approach to communication with parents is long established at Barsail Primary. Staff are able to address quickly any concerns that parents share. This open, two-way approach to communication prevents challenges escalating. Parents feel involved in and knowledgeable about their children's learning. They are familiar with children's progress as they can see their work on a regular basis. A few parents would like a refresher about how to make best use of the online platform. It has been updated recently.
- Parents relate strongly to the 'Barsail Family' and are proud that they and their children are part of it. They appreciate greatly the significance and relevance of the HEARTS values and see the positive impact these have on their children. They recognise the valuable skills children are acquiring as a result.

## 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

very 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's well-established approaches to developing staff, children's and parents' knowledge and understanding of wellbeing are commendable. Children feel cared for, listened to and included in decisions about their welfare. They speak knowledgeably about what actions they can take to ensure their wellbeing and that of others. Children understand what it means to be nurtured. They know how to nurture others through, for example, ensuring everyone has a friend to play with at break time.
- The school supports all children well through its positive relationship-focused approach linked to the school values. Staff use and model appropriate language to support children to speak openly about their feelings and resolve any disagreements when they occur. Children say they have an adult in school to talk to about any concerns or challenges they may be experiencing.
- This strong sense of community is resulting in children having a sense of belonging and being proud to attend the school. Children lead on several aspects of wellbeing. Trained 'Restore Reps' are developing citizenship skills by supporting peers with healing conversations in the playground at break time. All children say 'Restore Reps' help the playground to become a calmer, more enjoyable place to play and spend time with friends.
- Senior leaders work closely with a wide range of partners to maintain supportive and trusting relationships with parents. This is supporting parents and families to have meaningful, open conversations with teachers and senior leaders. Key partners support and deliver a variety of learning activities for children and families both within and out with the school. These opportunities are helping to boost children's resilience, social skills and emotional literacy.
- The school has well-developed processes for identifying children who may have additional support needs. This work is led very effectively by the depute headteacher. Children's plans are detailed and support professionals, children and families well. This ensures each child makes appropriate progress in their learning. Staff and partners take account of the legislative framework related to wellbeing, equality and inclusion. Children and parents are fully involved in identifying targets and reviewing their progress. Staff should continue to explore ways to simplify plans where possible and make key information more accessible.
- Teachers use appropriate interventions to support children's learning. These include a wide range of support materials and digital technology. Classroom assistants provide valuable support to ensure all children, including those requiring additional support, settle well and access learning.
- Staff organise the environment for learning well to meet the needs of children who face barriers to learning. Identified safe spaces support planned sessions involving children working with

teaching or support staff to build strong relationships together. As a result, children feel secure, calm and ready to learn. Staff and partners also use outdoor spaces successfully to promote team building activities, positive relationships and wellbeing.

- Children display a strong awareness of their rights. They develop strong leadership skills through, for example, participation in the pupil council, eco and finance groups. Children develop an awareness of rights by choosing their own leadership focus linked to the school values and priorities. Pupil literacy champions choose resources which are developing their peers' understanding and value of differences including race, religion and disability.
- The local authority submitted self-evaluation 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. The HNI also examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole school health-promotion duties as far as they relate to food and nutrition. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider that need to be addressed.
- The school recognises diversity and challenges discrimination across the school through its health and wellbeing programme, whole-school events and celebrations. The religious and moral education programme supports children to develop understanding of other faiths. Children now need to develop more understanding of global citizenship to see how individuals' actions can contribute to improving the world.
- The school uses its Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to improve children's attainment, attendance and engagement with learning. Staff work closely with partners to provide motivating outdoor learning activities, small group support for all children and targeted support for children experiencing barriers to learning. This has resulted in a few children exceeding projected targets in attainment and high levels of engagement with outdoor learning activities. The school regularly tracks and reviews the impact of targeted support. This ensures that staff can respond quickly to ensure that children receive the right kind of help when they need it.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

very 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

- Overall, children's attainment in literacy and numeracy is very good with a minority of children working beyond expected levels of attainment.
- Senior leaders and teachers use data to predict that attainment will continue to rise after a period of planning for recovery. Senior leaders use data effectively to monitor the progress of all children including targeted groups. Their careful use of data is helping address the poverty related attainment gap in literacy and numeracy.

#### Literacy and English

- Overall, most children are making very good progress in literacy and English. Staff have used interventions effectively to continue to close gaps in learning which resulted from COVID-19.

#### Listening and talking

- Overall children are making very good progress in listening and talking. At early level, almost all children listen very well to their teacher and peers. A few children require support to negotiate during group activities and contribute to class discussions. At first level, almost all children take turns and contribute relevant information and ideas during group discussions. A few children require support to share views during group tasks. At second level, almost all children express views effectively and listen respectfully to the opinions of others. Most children communicate clearly and audibly. They listen well to others and ask relevant questions.

#### Reading

- Overall, children are making good progress in reading. At early level, most children recognise initial sounds and blends and use these with increasing confidence to read unknown words. At first level, most children discuss aspects of different genres confidently and summarise the main ideas from a text. At second level, most children skim and scan a range of texts to identify the main ideas. They answer literal and evaluative questions and provide accurate evidence to support answers. They are not confident asking or answering inferential questions. At both first and second levels, children would benefit from more practice reading aloud to improve fluency and expression.

#### Writing

- Overall, children are making very good progress in writing and have closed significant gaps that arose during COVID-19. At early level, most children write simple sentences using basic punctuation. A few require support to use their knowledge of sounds to spell familiar words correctly. At first level, most children create their own texts in poems and reports using recognisable features. At second level, most children create a range of texts to suit the purpose of the task and audience. They use relevant subject vocabulary to enhance writing. Children

across all levels would benefit from revisiting writing skills regularly. This revision would help children to use these skills confidently in new and unfamiliar situations.

## **Numeracy and mathematics**

- Overall, most children are making good progress in numeracy and mathematics.

### **Number, money and measure**

- At early level, almost all children count on accurately from given numbers. They are becoming increasingly confident using numbers beyond 20. At first level, almost all children have a very good understanding of place value. They select appropriate strategies to add three-digit numbers confidently. Children are not yet confident in identifying equivalent fractions. At second level, most children work confidently with numbers up to one million. They are not yet confident when identifying the equivalent form of fractions, decimals and percentages. Across first and second levels, children are not confident at measuring length, width and height. They would benefit from regular practice of these skills.

### **Shape, position and movement**

- Across the school, children name correctly two and three-dimensional shapes appropriate to their age and stage. A few children describe the properties of known shapes with increasing detail. Children across the school use positional language correctly and use this knowledge when using digital tools.

### **Information handling**

- Across the school, children gather and display information in different ways. At early level, children use tally marks to record information correctly. At first level, children interpret data confidently when using bar graphs and Venn diagrams. At second level, children display information accurately using a range of ways including line graphs.
- Overall, children need more practice to recognise and use numerical and mathematical skills in real life situations. They need increased opportunities to use skills in new and unfamiliar situations to solve a range of problems.

### **Attainment over time**

- Senior leaders and staff have planned and implemented approaches to raise attainment in reading, writing, numeracy and health and wellbeing. School data indicates these approaches are helping to close identified gaps in learning which are a result of COVID-19. They are making very good progress in raising attainment in literacy and numeracy and have moved beyond planning for recovery.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievements**

- Staff recognise and celebrate children's achievements regularly. They use approaches such as an online platform and assemblies for this purpose. Senior leaders use data effectively to ensure no child misses out. They work with staff and partners to plan clubs and opportunities to enhance experiences of the most vulnerable children. Staff should support children to identify skills they are developing as a result of achievements within and out with school. Teachers should support children to identify how these skills can be used in different ways.

### **Equity for all learners**

- All staff have a very good understanding the socio-economic background of children and their families and individual needs. They provide valuable, skilled support to children. The headteacher uses PEF well to provide additional staff. This helps the most vulnerable children make progress and achieve. Additional staffing supports class-based interventions for individuals and groups in targeted areas such as reading, writing, numeracy and wellbeing. This

ensures staff meet all children's needs within the classroom and all children are fully included. These interventions are having a positive impact on children's progress. There is no longer a poverty related attainment gap in numeracy. The poverty related attainment gap in literacy has been closing steadily over the last three years. Identified children and their families engage more with reading as a result of a well-considered partnership between the school and the local library.

## Practice worth sharing more widely

- The highly effective approaches to developing staff, children's and parents' knowledge and understanding of the language of wellbeing and nurturing values is worth sharing more widely. The principal teacher, supported by psychological services, leads very well the high quality work promoting a consistent approach to developing very positive relationships. This translates the vision, values and aims into reality. This consistent approach to developing and promoting positive relationships is highly-effective in supporting improvement and recovery from the impact of COVID-19.
- All staff have developed appropriate skills successfully to support children's social and emotional wellbeing. Staff have created an inclusive approach to teaching and learning as a result. All staff reinforce this inclusive approach in the respectful and encouraging interactions they have with children at all times. They use and model appropriate language to support children to speak openly about their feelings and resolve any disagreements when they occur.

## 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.