Summarised inspection findings

Borrowfield Primary School

Angus Council

12 September 2023

Key contextual information

Borrowfield Primary School is a non-denominational school located in a residential area in the town of Montrose. The school consists of several separate blocks which house open-plan learning areas in the senior block, closed classrooms in the infant block and a variety of shared learning spaces. These are set within generous school grounds. The school catchment area includes homes across deciles three to nine of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Around 50% of children attending the school live in deciles three and four. In June 2023, the school roll was 216 children, arranged across nine classes. The senior leadership team consists of the headteacher, who has been in post for seven years, and a full time depute headteacher. There are two acting principal teachers (APTs), who have a reduced weekly teaching commitment.

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

- Across Borrowfield Primary School, all staff and children model the school values of ready, respectful and safe in their actions and words. Staff know children and families very well and work hard to create a nurturing and caring ethos, underpinned by positive, trusting relationships. They use restorative approaches skilfully to help create a calm, purposeful, relaxed environment where children feel safe. The school has recently been awarded the ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) Friendly Schools Award. This recognises the work senior leaders and staff have undertaken to ensure all children achieve through an inclusive and welcoming learning environment. As a result, children feel they are valued, cared for and supported well at school. Children are polite, well-mannered and very welcoming. They are enthusiastic learners who are proud of their school and keen to share their work with visitors. Almost all children enjoy the wide range of learning experiences on offer.

- Senior leaders and staff have developed a range of flexible learning pathways which support individual children and small groups very well. This has increased children's attendance, motivation and engagement in learning. Highly effective partnerships have enhanced learning experiences for all children as well as for targeted groups. For example, children develop a range of skills through den-building, fire-making, creative activities and physical challenges in the extensive outdoor learning space. Staff provide opportunities for children to be independent in their learning both in and outwith the classroom. Staff use every area of the school grounds well to provide positive opportunities to consolidate and extend learning across the curriculum.

- Staff follow a clear 'Ready to Learn' policy that is embedded across all classrooms. This supports them to ensure a consistent approach to promoting positive relationships, maintaining supportive routines and celebrating success across the school. As a result, all children understand staff expectations of their engagement, interactions and readiness to learn. Children are motivated to learn and can choose from a range of resources, tools and digital

technologies to help them succeed. Support staff are deployed effectively across the school and help children to learn in a wide range of contexts.

■ Digital technology is a regular feature of learning across the school. Children use tablets confidently, scanning matrix barcodes to access their learning independently. Children who are digital leaders support the development of digital technologies by leading learning lunches for staff. Through the Borrowfield Broadcasting Corporation, digital leaders have produced a series of vlogs to share with parents the approaches to learning used across the school. Information about children's learning is also shared with parents via an online platform. Parents comment positively on the effectiveness of this system and welcome messages about their child's learning and progress. Senior leaders should work with staff to ensure consistency in the use of the online platform across the school.

■ In almost all lessons, teachers provide clear and helpful explanations and instructions. All teachers use learning boards effectively to provide a visual map of the day, share the purpose of learning and the measures of success with the children. Teachers should develop further opportunities for children to identify the steps to success in learning. Almost all teachers use questioning effectively to check children's understanding of their learning. They should continue to develop their use of questioning to support children's higher order thinking skills. Staff provide timely and helpful verbal and written feedback to support children's understanding and next steps. They should continue to develop approaches to learning, teaching and assessment which offer opportunities for breadth, challenge and application and support children to lead their own learning further. This will help to meet the needs of all learners more effectively, including those who are capable of greater challenge.

■ Staff at the early stages of primary work very well with colleagues in the nursery to develop their approaches to learning through play across early level and beyond. By working together, they have created a stimulating and rich learning environment in class areas, in outdoor spaces and in the shared open area or 'onery'. There are opportunities for free-flow play in the 'onery' for children from the nursery and the P1/2 classes. Children's engagement in learning is high. They benefit from opportunities to explore, investigate, create and deepen their learning across the curriculum. Teachers at P1/2 have developed a responsive approach to planning which builds on nursery practice and takes account of children's needs, interests, questions and ideas. The responsive planning approach demonstrates effectively children leading their learning. Teachers use observation increasingly well to assess progress and plan next steps. Senior leaders and staff should continue to refer to national guidance and research as they build on this very positive development across early level.

■ Senior leaders support teachers to participate in a range of moderation activities across the school. Teachers collaborate with colleagues to plan, assess and moderate children's learning. As a result of these approaches, teachers are becoming more confident in their judgements of children's progress. However, there a need to increase teachers' consistent use of National Benchmarks to make better-informed judgements of children's progress in learning. Senior leaders should now support teachers to develop further their shared approaches to high quality assessment and their understanding of national standards. This should include opportunities to engage in moderation activity beyond the school.

■ Teachers use a range of progression pathways across all areas of the curriculum to plan learning appropriately over different timescales. Effective planning in the early years could be built upon and developed across the school to enhance further children's experiences and enable them to lead their own learning.

■ Senior leaders and teachers meet three times per year to review children's progress and attainment. They identify children who are making expected progress and those who require additional support. Together, they identify appropriate strategies, resources or interventions to overcome barriers to learning and reduce any gaps in learning for individuals. Senior leaders maintain an overview of the interventions in place for children over time. They monitor and review interventions regularly to ensure they are impacting positively on children's wellbeing, learning and outcomes.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

■ 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. At the time of the inspection, there were no identified areas for development.

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

■ Overall, children's attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making good progress from prior levels of attainment. A few children make very good progress and a few are working beyond expected levels of attainment. Whilst teachers' judgement of progress and achievement is becoming more reliable, it is not yet consistently accurate. There are more children achieving expected national standards than school attainment data would indicate in all areas other than listening and talking. A more robust approach to the assessment of listening and talking is required to support and inform teachers' professional judgement and improve the accuracy of attainment data.

Attainment in literacy and English

■ Most children will achieve expected attainment levels in literacy and English by the end of P1 and P4. The majority of children in P7 achieve as expected in literacy and English.

Listening and talking

■ Overall, children are making good progress in listening and talking. At early level, most children listen well to instructions and explanations, and respond well to praise and encouragement. At first level, most children take turns during discussion and contribute appropriately. They listen and respond to others in a respectful way. At second level, most children plan and deliver presentations with relevant content and appropriate structure. Children take part in debates and can politely disagree with others and build on others' ideas. Across the school, a few children require support to listen carefully to others during group tasks and discussion.

Reading

■ At early level, most children use their knowledge of initial and blended phonics confidently to read familiar texts. They enjoy discussing characters from stories and relate information and ideas from a text to personal experiences. A few children require support to recognise and read common words. At first level, most children explain preferences for texts and authors with enthusiasm. They identify and talk about the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. Children read aloud confidently and with expression. A few children should develop further their fluency. At second level, a majority of children understand plagiarism and copyright. They are not as confident in explaining the importance of authenticating sources of information.

Writing

■ At early level, children write for a wide range of relevant and real-life purposes. Most children write simple stories using capital letters and full stops, while making an attempt to spell familiar words correctly. A few children require support to structure their writing. At first level, most children explain and use key features of a range of writing genres appropriately. A few children need to develop their use of openers and connectives to further engage the reader

when writing stories. At second level, the majority of children can create texts for a range of purposes. They can present and organise information in a logical way, using sentences of different lengths, to engage the reader. Most children would benefit from further opportunities to write extended texts.

Numeracy and mathematics

■ Overall, children's attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children are making appropriate progress for their age and stage. A few children make very good progress from prior levels of attainment.

Number, money and measure

■ At early level, children explore numbers to 20 confidently and count in 2s, 5s and 10s with accuracy. At first level, most children identify accurately coins which add up to given amounts. They are less confident with identifying the correct amount of change when purchasing items. At second level, children carry out multi-step problems involving the four key operations. They would benefit from increased opportunities to apply these skills to a range of real-life contexts.

Shape, position and movement

■ At early level, most children identify common two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects. They explore the features of these using appropriate vocabulary. A few children require support to name three-dimensional objects. At first level, children use the terms clockwise and anti-clockwise correctly. They describe turns relating to the four main compass points using their knowledge of right angles. They are less confident in their knowledge of grid references. At second level, children use coordinates confidently to plot points on a grid. They would benefit from further practice in using simple scales for maps or diagrams.

Information handling

■ At early level, children use simple charts and pictograms to record and share information. They are becoming more confident in answering questions based on graphs. At first level, children talk about the benefits of using tally marks to record information. They are familiar with a range of ways to display information including Venn diagrams. At second level, children have investigated more complex line graphs and trend graphs. Across the school, children would benefit from more frequent opportunities to apply their learning in information handling to real-life contexts. This should include the use of digital technology to collate information and produce charts, graphs and diagrams.

Attainment over time

■ Senior leaders have developed a robust tracking system which provides helpful data about children's progress and levels of achievement over the last two years. They interrogate data at a whole-school, year group, cohort and individual level effectively and cross reference this with other useful information, for example, attendance. Data and a range of evidence show that overall attainment across the school has increased in reading, writing and numeracy and maths in the last 12 months.

■ Individual plans demonstrate that children who receive targeted support and interventions make progress against their own targets and milestones. This is not always reflected in the whole-school tracking system. Senior leaders should continue to develop their tracking system to enable clear identification of the impact of planned interventions over time for particular cohorts or individual children.

Overall quality of learners' achievements

- All children speak with confidence and pride when discussing their achievements and successes, both in and out of school. These are celebrated using a range of suitable approaches within the school including B.A.F.T.A. (Borrowfield's Awards For Terrific Achievements) at weekly assemblies and recognition boards. The school provides children with a wide range of leadership opportunities including pupil council, digital leaders, house captains and peer mediators. School events such as Borrowfield's Got Talent, eSports and the development of a digital classroom have enabled the children to apply their skills to real-life contexts.

- The school works alongside a range of partner agencies to offer children opportunities for personal achievements via flexible learning pathways such as Forest Schools, Cookery Classes and 'Mixing Music'. These opportunities have resulted in children being more personally and socially confident whilst enhancing their communication and interpersonal skills. In addition, some partners offer targeted support to children and their families and provide opportunities for children to develop skills for learning, life and work. The school is in the process of further developing children's life skills through the development of a school garden. Children talk about how growing fruit and vegetables will help them to develop skills which will improve their wellbeing.

- Staff track children's achievements and participation in wider achievements. This supports them to identify children who may be at risk of missing out. Senior leaders and staff should now build on this to help children understand and track the skills they are developing through participation in these activities.

Equity for all learners

- All staff have a very good understanding of the socio-economic background of children, their family circumstances and individual needs. Senior leaders have effective systems in place to ensure all children have opportunities to succeed and achieve. The headteacher uses Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) effectively to target support and improve children's wellbeing and overall outcomes. Senior leaders work very well with a range of partners to provide flexible learning pathways, tailored to the needs of individuals and groups of children who face barriers to their learning. These approaches are having a positive impact on children and their families. As a result, children's engagement, motivation and attendance at school is improving and they make increased progress in literacy and numeracy.

Other relevant evidence

- All children receive their entitlement to two hours of quality physical education each week.

- All children have access to a school library as well as texts within their own class areas. Children are encouraged to read for pleasure and enjoy a wide range of stories and texts including graphic novels.

Practice worth sharing more widely

Senior leaders have developed a range of highly effective partnerships to create flexible pathways and inclusive approaches to learning and teaching. These have a very positive impact on children's attendance, motivation and engagement in learning, as well as offering a source of support to parents and families as required. As a result, there is a strong sense of trust between home and school and parents feel well supported by senior leaders. Children's outcomes are significantly improved as a result of partnership working.

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.