

# Summarised inspection findings

**Meadowburn Primary School and Nursery Class**

East Dunbartonshire Council

26 November 2019

## Key contextual information

Meadowburn Primary School is a non-denominational school, situated in the town of Bishopbriggs in East Dunbartonshire. It is East Dunbartonshire's designated Gaelic Medium provision at primary and nursery stages.

The school's provision comprises nine primary classes and a nursery class in English Medium Education (EME), and four primary classes and a nursery class in Gaelic Medium Education (GME). In September 2019, the primary school had 236 children in EME and 85 children in GME.

The senior leadership team comprises a headteacher, depute headteacher and two principal teachers. The headteacher has been in post five years. One of the principal teachers has a remit for GME, with a few responsibilities bespoke to supporting improvement in GME.

### 1.3 Leadership of change

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

- Overall, leadership across the school is good. The school's vision, values and aims have been created and are reviewed regularly in consultation with children, parents and staff. They have been developed and agreed, taking full account of the social, economic and cultural context of the school, and relevant national policies. All staff have a strong commitment to children and families and have a good awareness of the importance of delivering equity for all children. They are aware of the need to recognise and close any attainment gap. Most staff are becoming more confident in analysing a range of data to identify attainment gaps, and inform the most appropriate next steps to address these.
- The headteacher has developed a welcoming, caring and supportive ethos, and has established a culture where staff at all levels are engaged in the change process. She encourages collegiate working and professional learning across the staff team. Leadership at all levels is actively promoted and most staff contribute to leading improvements across the school. The senior leadership team now need to review their roles and remits to provide clearer strategic leadership across the primary and nursery classes through the medium of Gaelic and English. This will help bring more focus and better outcomes to developments that are currently progressing within and across different sectors of the school.
- The school's arrangements for self-evaluation and information gathered are used effectively to inform priorities for improvement. The school improvement plan (SIP) details how the school is striving for continuous improvement. Staff contribute well to identifying the priorities for school improvement and have ownership of the plan. All stakeholders, including children should become more involved in shaping school improvement.

- The headteacher leads change and improvement with confidence. Together with the senior leadership team she promotes high standards. They have a well-organised quality assurance calendar, which is created in consultation with staff. The headteacher and depute headteacher observe classroom practice regularly. They discuss children's attainment and forward plans with staff termly and give detailed written feedback. They should now ensure that identified points for action for staff are routinely discussed and reviewed, and as part of ongoing improvement.
- The school has an effective professional review and development process which is clearly linked to the General Teaching Council for Scotland standards. Staff participate in peer classroom visits and value opportunities to observe their colleagues' practice. Senior leaders and staff should now develop this further, through more robust and focussed observations against aspects of learning and teaching. This should also help identify further best practice that can be shared across the school.
- Children welcome the opportunities they currently have to be involved in the pupil council, school groups and committees. Where they have been given responsibility to lead activities, they understand the steps involved from identifying an issue through to monitoring the impact of their actions. Children now need to undertake more leadership opportunities to lead their own learning. They also need to be supported to recognise further the skills for learning, life and work that they are developing as a result of these roles, and where they can apply these skills across their learning.
- Staff work well in teams and engage regularly in professional learning. They are improving further their professional knowledge and practice to support improved outcomes for children. Commendably, the headteacher has encouraged staff creativity and innovation with the development of professional enquiry. Individual practitioners are reflective in their work, and eager to seek advice from local and national guidance. Staff should continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of this work on raising children's attainment and achievement.
- Senior leaders and staff have established a variety of productive working relationships with the school community, which have a positive impact on the development of children's citizenship skills. More sustainable links should now be developed to make effective use of businesses, employers and parents in the local community. This should raise further children's awareness of potential career pathways.
- The senior leadership team and staff are implementing plans for the Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). They are aware of the need to continue to monitor and gather robust evidence of interventions and the impact on outcomes for all children. They need to continue to ensure their approaches result in closing the poverty related attainment gap and improve equity for all children.

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

### Learning and engagement

- The school's culture and ethos reflect staff's focus on improving outcomes for children. The school has a caring environment where relationships between children and staff are very positive. Almost all children feel safe in school, and they are well supported and cared for by staff. Children are well mannered, polite and respectful to others.
- Most children work well independently, as pairs, and in groups. They enjoy most of their tasks in learning. In most classes, lessons are well-matched to learners' needs. A few children feel their work could be more challenging, particularly in mathematics and reading. Inspection activity supports this observation.
- Almost all children are confident in using digital technology as part of their learning. Children create presentations, use search engines and access a variety of applications well to support learning. Digital Ambassadors work in classes to support children alongside their teacher.
- In most lessons, teachers share the purpose of learning and what is expected of children. In the best examples, targets for success are co-constructed and differentiated with children. Most children are clear about the purpose of their learning, and know how to be successful. Children's individual learning targets are displayed appropriately in classrooms, and around the school. A few children remain unclear about their learning targets. Teachers need to revisit their approaches to ensure targets are accessible and meaningful to children.
- Children have a few opportunities to lead their own learning during topic work, asking what and how they would like to learn. Teachers reflect this in their planning. Children's views are sought regularly through the pupil council, eco committee, health group and enterprise group, with representation from children in P1 to P7.

### Quality of teaching

- Overall, most teachers are well-organised and thoughtful about the activities they provide, ensuring children have a few opportunities for personalisation and choice. Teachers should be more creative and innovative to further enhance children's experiences, including for outdoor learning. They would benefit from a shared understanding of what constitutes effective learning, teaching and assessment. This will support consistently high-quality learning and teaching experiences for all children across the school.
- Across classes, all teachers and support staff ask a range of questions. In most lessons, teachers ask questions that probe children's thinking, encourage fuller responses and require children to justify their answers. Across the school, teachers need to learn from this good practice and build upon it to ensure consistency and develop depth of learning for children. This has been identified correctly as an area for development in this session's SIP.

- The school's emerging 'learning through play' approaches at early level continue to develop. Children's experiences are well-planned and most are engaged. Senior leaders should continue to review and evaluate the impact of this approach on children's progress and attainment.
- In most classes, teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and understood by children. Support staff are deployed well in classes to support learners, and are integral to the learning and teaching process.

### **Effective use of assessment**

- The school uses well a range of formative and summative assessments, as well as the Scottish National Standardised Assessments in P1, P4 and P7, to gather evidence of progress in learning. This data is discussed with the senior leadership team and teachers, as part of the school's quality assurance processes. Teachers use this data well to plan next steps in children's learning.
- The majority of teachers make good use of formative assessment approaches, including, providing children with verbal and written feedback, particularly in writing. In the majority of lessons, children are confident in using peer and self-assessment. Whilst teachers use summative assessments within reading and mathematics, senior leaders and staff need to review their approaches to assessment to ensure that these are integral to the learning and teaching process. Staff need to be clearer about the purpose of assessments, and how the outcomes will inform their planning. Children should have experiences where they consolidate and apply their learning in a range of contexts, to demonstrate breadth, depth and application.
- Staff report that they enjoy positive working partnerships across the cluster and regional improvement collaborative, which are helping to enhance their confidence in making teacher professional judgement of achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels in reading. Exemplars have been produced to support teachers to ensure that there is an agreed and consistent standard across schools. This work is commendable and teachers have commented this process supports their professional learning. As a next step, the staff team need to continue to develop their understanding and use of the moderation cycle, and ensure collegiate planning and assessment is integral to their work in school.

### **Planning, tracking and monitoring**

- Teachers use long, medium and short-term planning and curriculum progression pathways to support their planning of children's learning, ensuring appropriate progress and attainment. Staff should develop a more focussed approach in using progression pathways and National Benchmarks to inform their planning of learners' experiences. The school has a wide range of resources available. Staff should ensure these are used effectively to ensure children progress well through carefully planned learning.
- A clear tracking and monitoring process across the school is used well by senior leaders to record children's attainment of Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Staff need to monitor and track children's attainment across all curriculum areas and use the information to make accurate judgements on their progress.
- The senior leadership team meet teachers on a termly basis to provide feedback on planning, as well as regular attainment and tracking meetings. Senior leaders should now ensure that these meetings emphasise and focus more on children's progress, and include breadth, pace, challenge and opportunities for application of learning.

## 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Staff have developed a range of learning pathways across the curriculum. Most staff use pathways for literacy and numeracy consistently to support coverage of experiences and outcomes. These pathways enable staff to plan learning which offers progression for children as they move through the school. As planned, the staff team should continue to refresh learning pathways for all curriculum areas, to ensure children have regular access and make sufficient progress across all areas of the curriculum. Staff need to ensure children experience depth, relevance and progression in their learning.
- Staff are well placed to review the curriculum rationale to take more account of the school's unique setting in its local area, and consider the newly published curriculum refresh. Staff should ensure children are offered a more relevant and progressive curriculum as they move through the school.
- Commendably, the school has recently achieved a Digital Schools Award. Children enjoy using a range of digital tools in their daily learning. Younger children are developing well their digital literacy skills through activities such as accessing numeracy games confidently on class screens. Daily online activities support children to practise their spelling.
- The school's current approach to delivering the curriculum through interdisciplinary learning (IDL) offers children interesting learning experiences. However, staff need to identify where and when it is necessary and appropriate to plan discrete learning in order for children to develop their skills and increase their knowledge in specific curriculum areas. Staff also need to review learning contexts to ensure these better reflect the local area, and prepare children for life as citizens of 21<sup>st</sup> century Scotland.
- Staff should reflect on their use of the school day, and review the impact of activities such as Golden Time, clubs and morning challenges on children's learning. At times, staff could make better use of available time to help improve children's outcomes.
- The school is at the early stages of integrating skills for learning life and work as planned features of learning across the stages. As a school, staff need to ensure that next steps include offering children planned opportunities to engage with the Career Education Standards.
- As the school continues its curriculum improvement, staff need to embed a progressive programme and learning pathway for outdoor learning across all stages.

## 2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Almost all parents are happy with the work of the school and feel their children are making good progress. Meadowburn has an active Parent Council, which works in partnership with the headteacher, to support school life. Almost all parents feel they are encouraged to be involved in the Parent Council or Parent Teacher Association. Parents access school information readily through newsletters, social media and the website.
- Parents are encouraged to use home link diaries to support children with their homework. Family learning video clips, which are available to parents and families, and shown at 'Meet the Teacher' evenings, have increased opportunities for parents to engage in their children's learning. The school should continue with current plans to share children's learning with parents through online digital learning stories. A few parents would like more feedback about how their children are learning.
- Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school. The school provides a few opportunities for parents to lead learning. For example, a Spanish club, led by parents, is supporting children to develop their understanding of Spanish language and culture. As identified by the school and parents, these partnerships and opportunities should be further increased. This would support the school in Developing the Young Workforce agenda.

## 2.1 Safeguarding

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



### 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

good

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

- wellbeing
- fulfilment of statutory duties
- inclusion and equality

- The quality of children's wellbeing, equality and inclusion is good. Almost all children enjoy learning at school, and most feel that their views are listened to by their peers and staff. Almost all children say that they feel safe, and have someone to speak to if they are upset or worried about something. They think that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Children, staff, parents and partners describe the school as having a supportive and caring ethos, which is evident throughout the school community.
- Staff have a shared understanding of their responsibilities in relation to wellbeing and improving outcomes for children. The school seeks feedback from parents, staff and partners on the effectiveness of its work with children. Most children feel comfortable approaching staff with questions or suggestions. They demonstrate positive behaviour across the school, and respond positively to staff and visitors. However, senior leaders and staff should continue to develop and build positive relationships between pupils, to address concerns raised by a few children and parents.
- Most children are developing an understanding of their own wellbeing, using the wellbeing indicators and the school's vision and values. With prompts, they can articulate what the wellbeing indicators mean and give examples related to themselves. Staff need to build on these strengths to develop further children's understanding of the wellbeing indicators and their relationship to children's rights and health and wellbeing. Senior leaders' recognition of the importance of children's mental health and resilience, has resulted in this being an area for development.
- Senior leaders acknowledge the need for a more progressive and robust approach to measuring children's progress across the health and wellbeing curriculum. Staff should ensure that their assessments across health and wellbeing are more rigorous and reliable. Further moderation in health and wellbeing will help ensure greater validity and reliability of teachers' judgements. Staff need to develop effective approaches to tracking and monitoring children's progress in health and wellbeing.
- The headteacher works closely with the senior leadership team, teaching staff and support staff to ensure that they are proactive in fulfilling their legislative duties, including religious observance. Staff engage in professional training which helps them to improve the way they support and care for children. For example, they have increased their knowledge and understanding of factors that underpin wellbeing, such as alternative thinking strategies. The headteacher and depute headteacher maintain additional support for learning records. The information they hold is shared appropriately, and used by teaching staff and others to plan learning for individuals.

- Overall, the school has effective procedures in place to identify and support children with additional support needs. Most children with identified needs are supported well. Individualised educational plans are in place for those children who require these. Information contained within plans is relevant and used to inform next steps in learning. Support staff work effectively with children, ensuring they are supported well in their learning. The planned focus on understanding children's behaviour as a form of communication should support all children to experience success and appropriate progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders and staff work well with partners in supporting children's wellbeing. This involves developing strategies and skills to help children deal with their own feelings, beliefs and actions in a range of situations, such as, learning about safe, responsible and respectful use of the internet and social media, and having a better understanding of choices to support their wellbeing.
- The headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality regularly, and is proactive in dealing with any issues that may arise. The school's attendance and exclusions are above and below the national average, respectively. The senior leadership team know children well and are sensitive to individual children's and families' needs.
- Children build friendships and social networks as they develop shared interests through opportunities to attend a variety of after school clubs and activities. Participation levels across the school are good, and staff recognise the contribution these experiences make to children's overall health and wellbeing. Across the school, children benefit from a few opportunities to learn outdoors which they enjoy. In moving forward, staff recognise the need to develop further a progressive programme for children's outdoor learning.
- Children's participation in school groups and roles within school, such as the eco committee, pupil council, health group and digital leaders, helps them to apply their learning in a meaningful context. Children need to take more responsibility and lead on the development of group remits linked to school improvements.
- The school curriculum provides children with a range of opportunities to explore aspects of faith and diversity. Staff should develop further and evaluate these approaches to demonstrate whether children have a sound understanding of equality and inclusion. As planned, senior leaders should continue to review and address the cost of the school day to remove any barriers to participation and ensure equity of opportunity for all children.

## 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

- Most children across Meadowburn Primary School and Meadowburn Primary School Gaelic Medium Education Unit are making good progress in literacy and English language and numeracy and mathematics. The overall quality of attainment in these areas is good. Most children make good progress from their prior levels of attainment and achieve appropriate national levels in reading, writing, listening and talking and numeracy and mathematics. The school has headroom for further improvement in children's attainment across the school. Children who need additional support with their learning are making appropriate progress.
- Staff use a range of assessment tools to support their professional judgement of children's attainment. Overall, evidence from analysis of data, class observations, pupil focus groups, interviews with staff and sampling of children's work supports the positive picture of children's progress. However, the school's current approaches to assessment do not always support valid or reliable data. For example, teacher professional judgement of listening and talking is inflated, and the assessment of writing needs to be more holistic and evaluate children's demonstration and application of learning across a range of genre, purposes and curriculum areas.
- School staff have identified a number of children who are exceeding national levels. Staff should ensure children experience more depth and challenge across all curriculum areas, and that they can demonstrate and apply their skills and knowledge without adult prompts or support before moving on through Curriculum for Excellence levels.

### Literacy and English language

- Across the school, most children are attaining appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in listening and talking, reading and writing.

### Listening and talking

- Across the school, most children are making good progress in listening and talking, with a few children working below or exceeding national expectations. Children who have recently achieved early level, are beginning to take turns when listening and talking in groups. They answer questions about texts to show and support understanding. Most children make simple predictions, and talk about the role of the author, illustrator and blurb with increasing confidence. Children need to develop further their listening skills and understanding when listening to stories. Children who have recently achieved first level, recognise the difference between fact and opinion, and are beginning to contribute to discussions effectively. They are very keen to participate and are beginning to respect the views and ideas of others. Children working within second level, talk with confidence, acknowledging the thoughts and opinions of others, whilst being clear about their own views. They talk about higher-order thinking skills

and how these support their understanding when responding to open-ended questions. Across the school, a few children are not making sufficient progress in listening and talking

## Reading

Across the school, most children are making good progress in reading, with a few children working below or exceeding national expectations. Most children who have recently achieved early level, use their knowledge of sight vocabulary and tricky words to read text. They read aloud, with attention to simple punctuation. Children use contextual cues, primarily the picture, to support understanding of text. They now need to develop other strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. Children who have recently achieved first level explain their preferences for particular texts and authors. They identify key features of non-fiction texts, including content page, index and headings. Most children at second level read with fluency and expression, using appropriate pace and tone. They discuss character and plot well within the books they are reading. They are beginning to make recommendations to others based on their preferences. Across the school, more children could be attaining better in reading.

## Writing

- Across the school, most children are making good progress in writing, with a few children working below or exceeding national expectations. Children who have recently achieved early level are using capital letters and full stops in both imaginative and functional writing. They use a simple structure of beginning, middle and end to write a story. Children need to continue to develop their vocabulary. Almost all children who have recently achieved first level, write independently and punctuate most sentences correctly using descriptive language and connectives. The majority of children within second level, write extended pieces of writing, using paragraphs and a variety of sentence structures to engage the reader. They make good use of figurative language, including similes and metaphors. They now need to develop their skills in extended pieces of writing beyond imaginative writing pieces. Across the school, children's writing across different areas of the curriculum is not always of a consistently high standard.

## Numeracy and mathematics

- Across the school, most children are attaining appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in numeracy and mathematics.

## Number money and measurement

- Children who have recently achieved early level count on and back in ones to add and subtract. They solve simple missing number problems using patterns and numbers as cues. They identify coins and talk about real-life shopping experiences at school fayres and events. Most children know the months of the year in sequence. They are less confident when asked which month comes before or after, and cannot link these with the four seasons. Children who have recently achieved first level are developing their skills in place value and identify the value of each digit in a whole number with three digits. A few can do this for four digit numbers. Most children know simple fractions. They are confident using 24 hour clocks on digital tools. At P7, children who are working towards second level, are gaining confidence in applying the correct order of operations in number calculations when solving multi-step problems. They are confident and accurate in mental calculations using multiplication and division. They are developing skills in decimal fractions and percentages. A few children need to develop their skills in these aspects. Across the school, a few children need to continue to develop their skills in number, money and measurement.

## Shape, position and movement

- Most children who have recently begun working towards first level recognise common 2D shapes. They are unable to identify and name 3D objects. Children who have achieved first

level, describe the properties of 2D shapes and 3D objects including side, face, edge and base. They know that a right angle is 90 degrees and most are confident to label compass points. Children at P7, working towards second level, are confident to use appropriate vocabulary to identify and label a range of angles. A few are less skilled and lack confidence in using their knowledge of complementary angles to calculate missing angles.

### **Information handling**

- Most children at P1 are at the early stages of developing their skills in using simple signs, graphs and charts. They apply their counting skills to answer questions from a pictogram. Most children who have recently achieved first level, recall carrying out simple surveys in class, recording information using tally marks and displaying information in a bar graph. Most children in P7, who are working towards second level, can analyse and interpret information from data provided. They would benefit from more experience using real-life data. A few children are confident to use the language of probability accurately in describing simple events and outcomes.

### **Attainment over time**

- The school provided a range of data on children's progress over the last three years, including children's achievement of Curriculum for Excellence levels. This data reflects teachers' professional judgment, and a range of standardised assessments. It indicates that attainment for most children in literacy and numeracy, through the medium of English and Gaelic, has been consistently good across the school. However, the school's attainment data over time has not always been reliable or accurate. The school now needs to address this in order that staff have a more accurate overview of children's attainment over time. This will help staff to identify trends in children's attainment over time, and identify better the progress of particular cohorts of children.

### **Overall quality of learners' achievement**

- The school recognises and celebrates children's wider achievement in a range of ways, including at pupil-led assemblies, displays, newsletters and through social media. As a school, children work together to raise funds for local and national charities, and are developing their skills in citizenship. Children are proud of their individual achievements in and out with school. The majority of children participate in sport including football, gymnastics and swimming. Children in GME benefit from achievements to extend their use of Gaelic. The school should develop an overview of children's achievements, to ensure no child is at risk of missing out. Children need to develop an awareness of the skills for learning, life and work they are acquiring through their wider achievement activity.

### **Equity for all learners**

- Staff have a good awareness of ensuring equity for all children in the school, and take steps to support children whose social or economic circumstances might adversely affect their experience or attainment. PEF has been used to support improvements in literacy for targeted children. The rationale for the allocated use of this funding has been shared with both staff and parents. It will be important to continue to monitor carefully the impact of this funding in closing the poverty related attainment gap.

## Choice of QI: Personal support

This indicator focuses on the provision of high-quality support that enables all children and young people to achieve success. It highlights the importance of wellbeing and involving children and young people in decisions about how their needs should be met. Strong partnerships with parents and other partners who support children and young people are essential. Monitoring the impact of interventions and making timely adjustments to practice are key to providing highly-effective universal and targeted support. The themes are:

- universal support
- targeted support
- removal of barriers to learning

- Across the school, children in EME and GME, are cared for and shown a high level of respect, and staff provide a caring and supportive environment for children. Staff are knowledgeable about children's social, emotional and health needs. Support staff are deployed well throughout the school, and provide effective support to groups and individual children.
- All staff have a good awareness of the range of children's learning and their needs within all classes. Most children benefit from appropriate, well-planned learning and teaching that takes account of their needs. At times, staff need to provide a more differentiated approach to learning and teaching that takes better account of need, and ensures all children receive high-quality universal support.
- The school's targeted support is well-planned to meet the learning needs of individuals and groups of children. Teachers value the open-door policy operated by the senior leadership team. This supports children's learning needs that are highlighted and acted upon timeously. Children who receive additional support for their learning have appropriate support plans and targets which address their main barriers to learning. These targets are reviewed regularly with parents and partners. Targeted support to individuals and groups of learners is kept continuously under review.
- The senior leadership team and staff work effectively with a range of partners to identify and reduce the impact of barriers to children's learning. Partners, such as psychological services, contribute well to the assessment and support of children.
- School staff involve parents well in planning and reviewing their children's learning, and are keen to seek parents' views and involve them more fully in the life of the school. Whilst the school enjoys positive relationships with parents and partners in the local community, staff should develop further creative opportunities for family learning. This would have potential to help raise children's aspirations further and reduce barriers to their learning.

**This evidence contributes to the school's gradings for each of the Quality Indicators. It is in addition to the evidence for English Medium and focuses on the distinctive features of Gaelic Medium Education.**

### Context

Meadowburn Primary School and Nursery is the designated Gaelic Medium (GME) provision for East Dunbartonshire Council. There are 85 children in GME at the primary stages, with 22 in the sgoil àraich (nursery). In English Medium, children learn Gaelic as their first additional language (L2).

### 1.3 Leadership of change

- The headteacher places a high level of importance on leading a school in which there is learning through Gaelic and English (EME). Under her leadership, the uptake for GME has increased. She has managed resources well to ensure a range of staff support children's learning and wellbeing needs. Staff are all fluent speakers of Gaelic. The headteacher models her own use of some Gaelic very well when speaking to children, staff and partners. The aims of the school promote GME. The aims could potentially be used more regularly to measure how well these are being met.
- Staff use the Advice on Gaelic Education fairly well to influence change. They now need to use self-evaluation more to impact further on their practice. The school's improvement plan (SIP) identifies suitable priorities for GME. The school needs to develop further its induction arrangements for new staff. Parents welcome consultations on how to improve GME at Meadowburn Primary School. A recently established group representing the school, education authority, parents and Gaelic groups strengthens strategic planning for GME. This group is looking at the further development of 3-18 Gaelic Education within the school and local authority. The local authority should ensure that arrangements are in place for an experienced and fluent speaker of Gaelic to quality assure GME.
- Staff receive some pertinent feedback on their learning, teaching, assessment and the progress of their children from senior leaders and peers. They have sought feedback from teachers of GME within the Regional Improvement Collaborative. The principal teacher's increased involvement in giving Gaelic-specific direction and feedback would be helpful. This would be while working very closely within the strategic leadership of the headteacher.
- Staff benefit from professional learning, including by engaging in professional enquiry. An example of the impact of this is the learning used in the outdoors.

### 2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- The curriculum for GME is appropriately based on immersion. Staff have some planning in place to support children's progression in literacy and Gàidhlig, and learning through Gaelic across the four contexts. They should now review all of this, and develop a bespoke pathway for literacy and Gàidhlig. This should be based robustly on the curriculum design principles and immersion. This pathway should show how a range of resources is used to support children's progression, rather than resources driving learning.
- The school's curriculum design includes "golden time" and clubs. Most of this is delivered through the medium of English. The headteacher's monitoring of attainment should ensure that

sufficient immersion is used for delivering the curriculum to result in high-quality fluency and attainment for children. “Golden time” and clubs would be enhanced if they are supported by partners, and provide an opportunity to develop depth and breadth in children’s fluency as well as skills.

- Staff now need to ensure that the curriculum helps to build further on children’s progress and attainment to sustain improvements to the end of their primary experience. The school has identified correctly that the standard of children’s writing could be better. Staff should have higher expectations of what children can achieve in their writing across all areas of learning.
- Commendably, the principal teacher of Gaelic at Bishopbriggs Academy has a weekly teaching input for P7 as part of a transition programme. This concentrates on improving Gaelic language skills, while getting to know the children. This is helping children feel confident about moving to secondary school.
- Children have an understanding of some of the benefits of being bilingual, and being a speaker of Gaelic. This needs to be a stronger outcome of the curriculum.
- Commendably, in EME, children learn Gaelic (Learners) as their first additional language (L2) as part of a 1+2 Approach to Languages. Some Gaelic is used effectively at whole-school assemblies. This assists with promoting a sense of inclusion. Staff now need to embed more Gaelic in contexts of learning for those children in EME. In GME, children learn some German as their second additional language (L3) as part of a 1+2 Approach to Languages.

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

- In GME, almost all children engage enthusiastically with a range of immersion approaches. Children respond well to being rewarded positively for their use of Gaelic. At the early stages and, for some, at first level, children are learning through a more play-based approach to immersion in Gaelic. A range of contexts are afforded for this, including those which are adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated. Staff make some good use of songs, including some which are written by teachers to progress children’s individual learning. The pace of children’s learning through play would be enhanced further by more frequent interactions, provocations and commentaries in Gaelic. A few children need greater challenge in play. Teachers’ self-evaluation has identified rightly that more collaboration between staff and practitioners across the early level would be beneficial. Teachers’ observations of children playing are recorded by photographs and comments. Observations could be based more on the language being acquired by children and influence planning of better paced learning.
- Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is not yet consistent. Commendably, teachers use high-quality Gaelic in their teaching. For most of the time, teachers organise learning activities to meet the needs of most children. Team teaching is being used to meet learning needs, and encourage improved consistency in quality. For most of the time, children are keen to speak Gaelic in situations which are led by an adult, and in peer and small-group situations.
- Staff have developed a policy on learning and teaching in GME, which includes helpful advice on immersion. This should be extended to articulate a vision for play, assessment, profiling and target-setting across the setting. The policy should be used to test change, for example in play. All staff delivering 3-12 GME should have regular opportunities to collaborate and discuss effective implementation of this policy.
- Staff are building their confidence in the use of National Benchmarks, assessment and moderation. They now need to document more of children’s understanding of Gaelic through total immersion within the classroom. Teachers are introducing electronic profiling. Transition



to electronic profiling has the potential to help ensure continuity in capturing all of children's significant learning, and next steps in learning. Staff need to ensure that they embed these processes to secure children's progress and to help practitioners better identify progress over time and strengthen their professional judgements.

- Children's progress in literacy and numeracy is tracked by teachers and senior leaders. Staff should ensure more rigour in monitoring so that action points are set and met, with clear links to planning assessment and moderation. Teachers will be assisted with this by putting in place progression pathways. They should also continue to gain more knowledge and experience of the moderation cycle.

## **2.7 Partnerships: Impact on children and families – parental engagement**

- Staff have established very positive relationships with children, parents and families. Parents show a very high level of commitment to the school and GME. Comann nam Pàrant have been very proactive in promoting Gaelic, with the result that the numbers enrolling for GME have increased. Parents are offered relevant opportunities to learn Gaelic and they are supported with homework. Details of GME should be included in the school's handbook. This should be a clear narrative, along with information on websites, on children's learning and progression to Bishopbriggs Academy.

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

- Children enjoy supportive relationships and a caring ethos, founded on respect. Almost all children feel valued and supported. Staff use professional accreditation on learning outdoors to increase opportunities for children to learn in this context. Children articulate some of the resultant benefits. Staff need to extend this further and embed the use of the national wellbeing indicators. They also need to track children's progress in health and wellbeing to evidence the impact of their approaches on children's progress.
- Staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities related to statutory duties. Effective procedures are in place to identify and support children with additional support needs. Staff use a staged intervention approach to support children and identify appropriate interventions. Staffing is used effectively to provide support through the medium of Gaelic. Support for learning assistants, classroom assistants and team teaching provide Gaelic-specific, valuable and sensitive support in a range of ways to support children's learning and wellbeing in GME. A next step would be to formalise professional dialogue between support staff and teachers to be capturing regularly their impact on improving outcomes for children. On occasions, support needs to be more proactive rather than reactive to better meet the needs of all learners. Teachers of 3-18 GME should collaborate on approaches to dyslexia to provide continuity in the use of support arrangements as children progress in their learning.
- Staff should develop and improve further their approaches to differentiation so this becomes a consistent, high-quality feature across GME. This will assist in meeting the needs of all children and enabling them to achieve their full potential. Older children, and those who are higher attaining, need more challenge in their learning.
- The school and education authority have set-up a new strategy group with parents and Gaelic organisations to look at the further development of GME provision. This should enable further compliance with the Guidance on Gaelic Education, 2017.

- Overall, children, parents and staff in GME report to be treated fairly and with respect. Identifying Gaelic as part of the school's vision, values and aims signals the importance that is assigned to GME.

### 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Attainment and progress in literacy and Gàidhlig is good for most children. Due to small numbers of children at each stage of the school, broad statements about progress have been made to ensure the anonymity of individual children. In most cases, the data provided by the school reflects accurately children's progress in literacy and Gàidhlig. The school has headroom for improving children's progress and attainment so that children achieve to their full potential. This is particularly the case in writing.

#### Literacy and Gàidhlig

##### Listening and talking

- At early level, children have a good understanding of Gaelic used through total immersion. Children understand familiar, everyday language, which they express in a range of ways. They recall a range of songs. At first level, children are very spontaneous in their conversation. They use Gaelic well to access their learning across the curricular areas and contexts. Children are good at initiating conversations. At second level, for most of the time, children enjoy using their Gaelic in a range of contexts. They are good at expressing their ideas and preferences and presenting justifications. Children at first and second levels, in both talking and writing would benefit from less use of English in their Gaelic communication and improved grammatical accuracy. Teachers are at a good stage to support improving attainment by reviewing how well the total immersion phase can address recurring grammatical inaccuracies. More children need to develop their skills further in listening and talking.

##### Reading

- Almost all children enjoy reading in both Gaelic and English. They find the wider availability of English texts makes reading in English appealing to them. They talk about their own reading preferences and favourite authors. At early and first levels, most children are developing well their skills in reading. Across stages, children need to be reading more of a range of texts.

##### Writing

- The majority of children are independent in writing a sentence as they begin first level. Within first and second levels, the school has good examples of children able to write at the expected Curriculum for Excellence level. Overall, children need to improve their skills in writing across the school, including writing for a range of purposes.

## 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.