Summarised inspection findings

Hill of Beath Primary School

Fife Council

21 February 2023

Key contextual information

Hill of Beath Primary School and Nursery Class is situated in the village of Hill of Beath. The nursery class is in a building off campus. Almost 10% of children fall within the Scottish Multiple Index of Deprivation deciles 1 and 2 and almost all other children live within deciles 3 and 4.

There are 183 children on the school roll, organised in to seven classes. There are 45 children in the nursery. The headteacher was appointed to the school in 2019 and the principal teacher took up post in 2020.

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

- Almost all children are welcoming and friendly to visitors to the school. The ethos and culture of the school reflect staff's commitment to children's wellbeing, motivating learning and development of positive relationships throughout the school. School values underpin work in classes and communal areas. The children are beginning to connect the values of the United Nations Rights of the Child with the schools' vision and values.

- The quality of teaching in the school is strong with a few examples of very strong practice. In the last few years, staff have implemented new learning and teaching approaches successfully. This includes structuring a lesson into four clear parts. Teachers use this structure for lessons across the curriculum. This whole-school approach is ensuring consistency and is leading to positive pupil engagement in the learning process. Almost all teachers share the purpose of lessons and support children to co construct 'steps to success.' This is helping to support children's understanding of how to be successful in their learning. Most staff use questioning effectively to engage whole classes and groups. In almost all lessons, tasks and activities are adapted to meet the needs of most learners. However, there are a few children across the school who are not engaging fully in learning. Senior leaders should ensure that all children's learning needs are supported appropriately.

- Most children contribute effectively to the life of the school and wider community through a variety of planned learning experiences and pupil participation groups throughout the year. For example, they are enthusiastic Young Librarians, Junior Road Safety Officers and Eco leaders. Children from all stages are represented on the pupil council. Children can talk about developing their communication and leadership skills through membership of their groups. Most children say that their views are sought, valued and acted upon. Staff should continue to build on these approaches so that all children feel listened to and their views valued. There should be more opportunities to link skills for life, learning and work as identified by staff.

- In P1, staff are working with practitioners in the nursery class to develop their practice in line with national practice guidance, 'Realising the Ambition: Being Me'. Staff provide learning experiences which are beginning to develop and encourage children's creativity and independence. Staff use questioning well to extend children's thinking and develop their curiosity. Their interactions with children are very positive and supportive. Across the school, staff would benefit from opportunities to develop further their knowledge and skills within play pedagogy. Staff should explore how best to promote the role of the adult in meaningful play activities. They should continue to develop their use of learning spaces and resources within the classroom to improve children's experiences further.

- Staff make effective use of digital technologies across almost all areas of the curriculum to enrich children's learning experiences. Staff have undertaken collegiate activities to share skills and ideas in digital technology which is contributing towards Digital Schools' accreditation. Children across all stages used laptops, tablets and interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance, record and share their learning. Children and staff make good use of an online platform to facilitate the sharing of learning between school and home. This supports parental engagement and effective parent, pupil and teacher dialogue about children's learning and achievements.

- Across the school, all staff are promoting outdoor learning opportunities. Staff are making positive use of the local environment such as the nearby woods to support learning beyond the school grounds. They should continue to consider how to monitor and track the skills children are developing through their outdoor learning accreditation award.

- Staff use a range of assessment strategies, both formative and summative to ensure children are making progress. Across the school, almost all staff use feedback effectively to support improvement in children's learning. Children set targets within their learning profiles and are supported by their teachers to reflect on their progress. Teachers also provide children with opportunities to discuss their preferred learning styles.

- Teachers' long-term planning is linked to the experiences and outcomes for all areas of the curriculum and is also referenced to the National Benchmarks. Staff supplement these with more in-depth weekly planning of learning and teaching. Across the school, there is a strong ethos of staff collegiality and positive working relationships. Staff work together to share standards in writing. They should continue, as planned, to develop moderation of learning across the curriculum, within and beyond the school. This would support a shared understanding of achievement of a level.

- Class teachers track and monitor the progress of most children effectively. Staff are increasing their confidence in using this data to identify progress and plan appropriate next steps for children. It will be important for staff to ensure that children are not moving too quickly through Curriculum for Excellence levels. Senior leaders and staff should continue to improve how they use data to identify and target additional support where required. In addition, senior leaders should ensure staff working alongside class teachers have the necessary skills to enable them to provide high quality universal and targeted support.

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 numeracy is good.

- Data shared by the school indicates that most children are achieving appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels. Inspection activities identify that the school's data is not yet wholly accurate. Senior leaders should continue to support staff to engage more fully with the National Benchmarks and in moderation activities in literacy and numeracy. This will support them in developing an improved, shared understanding of standards to strengthen the accuracy of all professional judgements.

Attainment in literacy and English

- Overall, children are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. Staff recognise that the pandemic has had an adverse impact on children's progress in writing. As a result, staff have introduced new approaches for teaching writing. There are early indications that this is having a positive impact. Staff should continue to ensure they maintain high expectations of children's writing, including spelling, punctuation and presentation.

Listening and talking

- At early level, most children listen well to adults to undertake tasks and activities. They are learning to take turns during small group discussions. They enjoy listening to stories.

- At first level, most children pay attention to their teachers in whole class lessons. The majority of children are confident and engage well in discussions with adults. The majority listen well to instructions and can express their views and offer their own opinions. A few children need support in listening to others and in taking turns.

- At second level, most children are able to contribute relevant ideas when engaging in group discussions. Older children can require prompting at times to listen respectfully to others. They are not yet able to build on the ideas of others. The majority of children are able to engage well with digital texts and make notes to create new texts. Children working at first and second levels, would benefit from having more opportunities to plan and deliver presentations. They would also benefit from having opportunities for debating.

- There is a need for staff to ensure they develop children's listening and talking skills progressively and provide them with opportunities to apply them across their learning.

Reading

- At early level, children are learning to identify different initial sounds. A small group of children are beginning to recognise digraphs. They are able to blend a few sounds to decode

new words. Children enjoy exploring books and a few choose to listen to recorded stories independently as part of their play.

- At first level, a majority of children read fluently. They can summarise the main points and predict the meaning of new words using clues in the text. They are not confident in explaining the author's use of punctuation. Children at first level now need to develop their reading skills through a wider range of texts.

- At second level, children share confidently their favourite authors and books. They describe well why they prefer particular genres such as humour and mystery. Children who are well on track to achieve second level read with fluency and understanding. They can identify the main ideas from a text using reading skills such as skimming and scanning. They are able to explain the difference between fact and opinion. A few children are able to choose their own reading material to use for reading activities. It is important that they also have opportunities to come together with peers to study shared texts.

- Staff have established a new school library. Children speak enthusiastically about the range of books they can read. Staff should continue to develop children's love of books to provide children with books to read at home.

Writing
- Children at early level are learning how to form letters correctly. They are exploring the purpose of letter writing and making attempts to copy or write words independently. A few children are able to link their understanding of sounds to write simple words. A few are making positive attempts to write simple sentences.

- At first level, the majority of children can create texts for a range of purposes and audiences. They can select appropriate vocabulary to describe feelings, thoughts, and events. Staff have recently introduced new approaches to teaching writing which are motivating children and helping them to improve the structure and content of their writing. Staff should continue to review and develop the criterion against which they assess writing. Children would benefit from more purposeful feedback to provide clearer picture of expectations and what success can look like.

- At second level, children write for a range of purposes. The majority are able to identify key features of different genres. They are able to describe confidently different examples of figurative language such as similes and metaphors. Children, who are on track to achieve second level, demonstrate a strong understanding of figurative language and are making positive attempts to use this in their own writing. Children would benefit from having more regular opportunities to develop their understanding of spelling strategies and rules. They also need support to apply their understanding of punctuation consistently across their learning.

Numeracy and mathematics

Number, money and measure
■ The majority of children working at early level confidently add within 10, recognise number bonds within 10 and subtract within 20 using concrete materials. The majority of children at first level, can round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100 and can identify and write numbers within 1000. Children on track to achieve second level can round fractions to the nearest whole number and one decimal place. They are confident in writing equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages. Children at first and second level need to develop their strategies to solve multiplication and division questions accurately.

Shape, position and movement
■ At early and first levels, the majority of children can identify and create pictures using simple 2D shapes. At second level, children can identify the properties of 3D objects. Children at first level need more opportunities to identify and create examples of tiling. At second level, the majority of children are able to use the language of acute, obtuse, straight and reflex to describe and classify a range of angles. Children at second level need to improve their knowledge of perimeter and area.

Information handling
■ At early and first level, children create bar graphs to share information. At second level children build on this learning by creating pie charts and line graphs. Children can explain why you would use a certain type of graph, for example, temperatures on a line graph. Children need now to have more opportunities to apply these skills across different areas of the curriculum.

Attainment over time
■ The school gather a range of data which details the progress children are making in literacy and numeracy. This includes teachers' detailed class trackers for literacy and numeracy. The headteacher should continue to develop a clear overview of children's attainment over time. Staff are not yet tracking children progress across the curriculum.

Overall quality of learner's achievements
■ Staff celebrate children's achievements regularly through the life and work of the school. Weekly assemblies and colourful displays highlight children's achievements. Children are proud of their achievements in, for example, boxing, dance and swimming. Staff make use of 'citizenship awards' to recognise the contribution of children to the life of the school. Most children are represented on a school committee or group. They are able to discuss the skills they are achieving and where they can use these skills in real life situations.

■ Children take part in after school clubs when they are available. Staff monitor and track all children's achievements at home and in school. As a next step, the headteacher should track the important skills children achieve through their involvement in activities within the school and local community.

Equity for all learners
■ The headteacher and staff know children and their families who are facing social and economic challenges well. The Pupil Equity fund (PEF) plan focuses resources to address attendance, engagement in learning and raising attainment in reading, writing and numeracy for identified children. Children who are affected by poverty are making satisfactory progress in their learning. Almost all PEF funding is used to enhance staffing to better support targeted children in their learning. The headteacher should ensure that improved staffing levels are building

capacity in all staff. Senior leaders are beginning to collect data to help identify and support the needs of targeted individuals and groups. This is beginning to provide a clear picture of the gaps in the attainment between those children most affected by poverty and their peers. There is potential to strengthen further the monitoring of the impact on outcomes of PEF funding to accelerate identified children's progress further.

- A minority of children's attendance at school remains a cause for concern. Senior leaders and staff should continue to monitor children's attendance closely and explore different approaches to improve attendance.

- Staff understand the challenges for families in relation to the cost of the school day. Currently, there is no cost for school outings or clubs. Families can access a 'green wardrobe' to recycle children's clothes. This approach is supporting families well.

- Teachers are beginning to use helpful 'quick sheets' which help to identify children's barriers to their learning. This is supporting teachers to have a fuller understanding of most children's additional support needs. Staff are at the early stages of developing 'inclusive classrooms' by creating attractive and comfortable spaces in which children learn. A range of resources are in place to support children to engage more fully in their learning. For example, symbols and visual timetables support a few children to make greater sense of their learning. Teachers are becoming more aware of the complexity of their language when talking to children. Senior leaders should support further pupil support assistants to understand their role to help all children to be included successfully in learning.

- A few children's additional support needs are not yet identified or met appropriately. Children can be supported better, through the addition of clear processes for identifying and planning appropriate learning activities. This will also help teachers, thereafter, to provide helpful strategies to ensure children can make better progress.

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.