Summarised inspection findings

Bilston Primary School

Midlothian Council

24 April 2018

Key contextual information

Bilston Primary School and the nursery class opened in its new building in August 2016. It is a co-educational, non-denominational school. The headteacher took up post in April 2016 to oversee the move from the old to the new building. The school serves the catchment of Bilston and the surrounding area, within Midlothian Council. It will accommodate an increasing roll over the next few years due to planned new house building. Bilston Primary is part of Beeslack Associated School's Group along with Beeslack High School, Roslin, Mauricewood and Glencorse Primary Schools. There are 82 children currently in P1-7 and 26 children in the nursery class, which has the capacity for 30:30 morning and afternoon places. The school had no P7 children last session. The school has a newly established Parent Council.

1.1 Self-evaluation for self-improvement	satisfactory

This indicator defines rigorous self-evaluation as a responsibility of all stakeholders. It highlights the importance of partnership approaches to self-evaluation and continuous improvement. It emphasises the need for strong leadership and robust analysis of a range of intelligence and data as essential features of effective continuous self-improvement. A key factor in this indicator is demonstrating the impact of self-evaluation in relation to outcomes for all learners. Their active participation in self-evaluation is therefore essential. The themes are:

- Collaborative approaches to self-evaluation
- Analysis and evaluation of intelligence and data
- Ensuring impact on learners' successes and achievements

- The headteacher's clear direction and leadership since the school opened in August 2016 has enabled improvement priorities to be identified and evaluated appropriately. The headteacher is very knowledgeable about the needs of the children and the school. Staff know the children well and are committed to improving outcomes for them.

- The headteacher involves all stakeholders in aspects of the life and work of the school in order to determine the improvement priorities. Views are gathered and actioned through a range of ways, for example, parents are asked what learning events they would find useful and children discuss their ideas at 'tea parties' with the headteacher. Staff, parents and children were involved in making the school's vision, values and aims more meaningful, and as a result of parents' views approaches to homework changed.

- The school's standard and quality report records progress and identifies next steps effectively. Under the headteacher's leadership staff work well together and are beginning to look beyond the school to improve their approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. A few staff undertake practitioner enquiry to develop their professional learning. Staff participate in a range of well-structured professional learning activities to support school improvement. A few staff actively take on aspects of leadership to support school improvement.

- Staff are committed to self-evaluation and to the school improvement process. Through collaborative planning with the headteacher, professional learning opportunities, and the tracking and monitoring of children's progress, staff are beginning to develop a shared understanding of standards for literacy and numeracy. However, shared standards are not yet consistent across all stages. Staff are at an early stage of moderating their practice and are beginning to work together with colleagues from their associated school's group. They have started to use the national Benchmark guidance. As planned, we suggest staff continue to seek out good practice and work together with colleagues beyond the school to ensure a shared understanding of standards is consistently applied across the school.

- Staff analyse a range of data and regularly meet with the headteacher to discuss children's attainment and wellbeing. This supports staff to plan interventions for children to remove potential barriers to learning. The school has successfully targeted groups of children to improve their literacy skills. Learning environments have been reorganised in the early years' classes to improve children's experiences, particularly through play. Pupil Equity Funding is focused on raising attainment in literacy and is targeted appropriately, with some evidence of improvement. In the majority of lessons observed most children's needs are met well and children are supported to learn. However, in a few lessons the pace of learning is too slow and tasks are not well-matched to the children's needs. Staff should now ensure that approaches to learning, teaching and assessment meet the needs of all children appropriately. Staff are involved in the tracking and monitoring of children's progress, however, this now needs to be more robust to ensure all children make the best possible progress.

- The school's strengths and improvements are communicated to the Parent Council. The Parent Council supports the headteacher to involve the wider parent group in decision making about the school. As a result of parents' views, music and physical education specialists now regularly work with children across the school. The headteacher has developed strong and relevant partnerships within the wider community, which support staff to improve outcomes for children well. For example, close partnership working with the Active Schools Coordinator enables clubs which are popular with the children, such as dance and football. The school has identified a need to engage parents more in learning with their children in school, and plan to address this. Staff should continue to gather parents' and children's views systematically to engage them in self-evaluation and school improvement planning processes more fully.

- The school has rightly focused on supporting children's wellbeing in the move to the new building. Under the leadership of the headteacher, staff have developed a school which is welcoming and nurturing for all. Their priorities are to create strong relationships, develop positive behaviour management and successfully create a nurturing ethos across the whole school. The school supports children and their families well. Children feel safe and cared for and value the opportunities the new building brings them. As part of developing a nurturing school staff offer a 'soft start' every morning enabling children to be in class relaxing and playing for ten minutes before the morning bell. As a result children settle well to their learning at the start of the day. Children also have the opportunity to attend an early morning breakfast club and an after school club is available.

- Staff identify that children are more confident, feel valued and have a greater sense of belonging this session. Children take on leadership roles such as buddies and house captains. There is scope for children to be involved more in their learning and in decisions about matters affecting them. As planned ensure all children have opportunities to develop the skills and attributes for learning, life and work.

- Children take a pride in their school and talk with enthusiasm about the values they have agreed on, of particular pride is the school badge designed by one of the children and capturing the history of the community very well.

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.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

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 attainment in literacy and numeracy

- Overall children's progress in attainment in literacy and English language, and in numeracy and mathematics is satisfactory. Given the small numbers of children at particular stages across the school, all class or stage groups are not referred to in this section, where it could be possible to identify individuals.

- Across the school almost all children are making satisfactory progress from their prior learning. As Bilston Primary School is a new school there is limited data available to assess children's attainment and progress over time. Staff are at an early stage of using standardised assessment. According to the data provided by the school, most children are on track to achieve the appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy by June 2018. The findings during the inspection week support the school's current data. Staff now recognise the need to participate further in assessment and moderation activities, which will support a shared understanding of children's progress in achieving a Curriculum for Excellence level. This will support staff to develop a shared standard in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics. They have made a start to becoming more involved in this process by participating in moderation activities at school and at authority level.

- Attainment is strongest within the early level where almost all children achieve early level by the end of P1 in literacy and numeracy. Last session, by the end of P4 all children achieved first level. The majority of children at first level are predicted to achieve appropriately by the end of this session. Last session there was no P7 cohort. At second level, most children are predicted to achieve appropriate Curriculum for Excellence levels in literacy and numeracy. Through staff observations and feedback evidence there are signs that the school is beginning to make a difference for children's attainment in literacy. The school now needs to monitor children's progress to ensure that all children are provided with appropriate support, pace and challenge to make good progress in their learning, particularly in numeracy and mathematics.

- Children with English as an additional language are making good progress in their learning. Pupil Equity Funding and a range of support for learning interventions, such as play therapy, are used well to support identified groups and individuals, and reduce any potential barriers to learning, particularly in literacy.

Attainment in literacy and English

- **Listening and talking:** Across the school, most children listen well and respond to each other in a respectful manner. Overall, most children articulate their ideas clearly and confidently. At the early level, almost all children demonstrate an increasing ability to take turns when listening

and talking. They ask and respond to simple questions about texts to show their understanding well. Across first and second level, most children are making satisfactory progress. They contribute their ideas and opinions confidently when engaging with others in pairs, groups or whole class situations. Most children at second level demonstrate respect for the views of others and communicate clearly, audibly and with expression. At second level, children take part in debates and presentations, however they are not yet able to discuss the skills developed in listening and talking through different contexts in learning. The school now needs to focus on effective assessment and moderation of listening and talking including, opportunities for children to develop their skills through breadth, challenge and application of these skills.

■ **Reading:** At early level, almost all children are making good progress in developing knowledge and application of phonics confidently. They identify sounds at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of words. Most children engage well with texts and make links between reading and writing. For example, children at the early level can identify 'WOW' words in different texts. They confidently contribute to discussion about events, characters and ideas relevant to texts. Most children working at first level can read familiar pieces of texts aloud, showing their understanding and beginning to use expression. At second level, most children make relevant comments about structure, characterisation and setting. Children working within second level demonstrate higher order thinking skills very well. For example, when discussing the importance of studying texts written in the Scots language.

■ Staff have recognised the need to improve the teaching of reading across the school, based on a clear skills progression framework. A clearer strategic plan to ensure consistent approaches to teaching reading skills will support staff to achieve this. There is scope to ensure all children experience a range of texts more frequently, and at an appropriate level of challenge. In best practice, a variety of purposeful learning activities motivated children well to engage meaningfully with a range of texts. These approaches to learning now need to be more consistent across the school. Staff should use assessment information more effectively to inform their professional judgement of children's progress.

■ **Writing:** Across the school, children write for a variety of purposes in imaginary and real-life contexts. At early level, almost all children use capital letters and full stops correctly in sentences. The majority of children are making satisfactory progress in writing across the transition from early to first level. By the end of the first level, the majority of children are predicted to achieve the level. At second level, almost all are making the expected progress to achieve the level. Across the school, expectations for children's writing are not yet high enough. Children need more opportunities to apply their writing skills in different contexts. In a few lessons learning intentions and success criteria are not always clear or well-matched to the needs of the children. Children would benefit from more focused feedback on what they do well and what they need to do to consolidate their writing. This will help the on-going development of children's writing as they progress through the school. Staff now need a clearer consistent approach to the teaching of writing to ensure children build on previous learning effectively. Staff have made an early start to assessing and moderating children's writing and welcome the opportunity to have clearer direction and support in this area.

Attainment in numeracy and mathematics

■ Attainment data provided by the school for numeracy and mathematics in June 2017 shows that almost all children at the end of early level, and all children at the end of first level achieved the expected Curriculum for Excellence level in numeracy and mathematics. Across the school staff have recognised that developing children's skills in mental calculations is an area for improvement. Teachers have begun to develop a greater focus on mental calculations through the Basic Facts programme. In numeracy and mathematics, approaches to learning, teaching and assessment are not yet consistent across the school. Staff now need to improve how they plan for learning, teaching and assessment to ensure that all children experience appropriate pace and challenge, and that expectations for all children are high.

■ Overall, most children are making satisfactory progress and are developing skills in numeracy and mathematics. Staff follow the Midlothian guidance for numeracy and mathematics and are working together to improve planning and assessment in order to meet the children's needs more effectively. During inspection activities, such as talking to children, observing learning and sampling their work, it is evident that there are gaps in the children's understanding of numeracy and mathematics at first and second level. The headteacher is aware of this and is addressing it with staff through a range of professional learning activities.

■ **Number, money and measure**: At early level, most children engage well in learning tasks. They count forwards and backwards and order numbers from smallest to largest and largest to smallest within 20 confidently. They are beginning to recognise and match coins up to £2.00. With support children are beginning to self-assess how well they understand what they are learning. As they progress through the school children are developing confidence in working with a wider range of numbers and across first and second level a majority can confidently demonstrate mental calculations.

■ At first level, the majority of children are confident with aspects of adding, subtracting and multiplying. They are beginning to develop an understanding of place value. Children at first level are not yet confident in applying skills using a range of measurements. At first and second level, children need to develop skills in using units of measurement appropriately to estimate and measure, such as height and length in metres and for older children also how to calculate area.

■ At second level, most children work well with their tables and show some understanding of strategies to solve multiplication word problems. They are confident with written calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, including for money. They round numbers accurately to 10, 100 and 1,000 and for a few children to 1,000,000. Most children show a good understanding of place value and a few understand the place value of numbers up to 10,000,000. They are not yet able to demonstrate a clear understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals.

■ **Shape position and movement:** Children across all stages can explain some understanding of 2D shape and 3D objects. At first level, a majority recognise simple 2D shapes, such as a triangle, square and rectangle and 3D objects, such as a cube, cuboid and sphere. They match coordinates to pictures on a grid accurately. At second level, most children recognise some of the properties of 3D objects, such as faces, corners and edges. At second level, a majority identify right and acute angles. There is scope to further develop the children's understanding across the school for shape, position and movement.

- **Information Handling:** At early level, children gather information and count using tally marks and through vote taking. At second level, children in a sample group successfully interpret data using tables and draw conclusions from information accurately. They confidently talk about their findings, for example, from tables, bar charts, line graphs and pie charts.

Attainment over time
- At the time of the inspection the school was able to provide limited data on children's attainment over time as they progressed through the school. The available data consisted of summative assessments and teachers' professional judgement. Staff have an understanding of data which takes into account the socio-economic context of the school.

- The school has correctly identified gaps in attainment for groups or individuals. The Pupil Equity Fund provides the school with additional staff to support children's learning in literacy. Staff are implementing a range of interventions and now need to monitor how effective these are in making a difference to the children's progress. The school has identified the need to target the Pupil Equity Funding to develop numeracy and mathematics. The school has also identified the need to develop staff skills further in moderating how well children are progressing through the Curriculum for Excellence levels. This will support staff to raise attainment and achievement further for all children.

- Staff recognise the need to track individual children's progress more effectively as they progress through Curriculum for Excellence levels. The school is beginning to make some use of the Benchmark guidance. All teachers should now engage fully in using these support materials to develop a clearer, shared understanding of how well children are achieving. As staff develop their approaches to moderation, and shared standards of expectations, they will have greater confidence in their own professional judgement of children's progress. This will, in turn, enable them to provide a higher level of challenge for all children.

Overall quality of learners' achievement
- Children are very proud of their new school and their achievements. The school now needs to ensure that all children are developing the four capacities through a range of experiences and learning contexts. Children should now have opportunities to continue to build on their skills for learning, life and work in their community and in the school. For example, developing leadership skills through involvement in a wide range of groups and activities that give them more responsibility in a real context.

- Partnerships between specialists, teachers, parents and the wider community are strong and supportive in improving children's achievements and the work of the school, for example, a youth club for children in P6 and 7 and, through supporting children's transition to Beeslack High school.

- The school has begun to support all children's wider achievement. A more rigorous approach to raising the profile of wider learning will help to establish a culture which recognises achievements in relation to skills and attributes for learning, life and work. This will support children to understand the value of learning through their interests and how this can be applied in other areas.

- The school is focusing on developing opportunities for children's wider achievements. All children are encouraged to participate in Active School activities and financial support is made available to children and their families to promote equity and ensure all children can access a range of activities. Children in P5-7 are participating in a curriculum based Junior

Award Scotland programme and parents are encouraged to become involved too. A few children have opportunities to take responsibility for the wider work and life of the school, such as technical support at assemblies. Children's wider achievement is celebrated through assemblies and through display on the school's 'Wider Achievement Board'.

Equity for all learners

■ Staff know the demographics of the school and its community well. This knowledge and understanding of any potential barriers or disadvantages supports staff to ensure all children are treated fairly and equally. The headteacher is well informed about the Scottish Attainment Challenge and is targeting the Pupil Equity Funding appropriately to raise attainment in literacy. Teachers are aware of the needs of children and speak positively about the levels of support and the nurturing environment across the school. They target resources to support children to achieve the best they can, such as through play therapy and extra reading. The school now needs time to implement its systems and assess fully how well its approaches to equity are positively impacting and improving outcomes for all children.

Explanation of terms of quality

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quality 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.