Summarised inspection findings

Burnbrae Primary School and Nursery Class

Midlothian Council

10 March 2020
Key contextual information

Burnbrae Primary School serves the area of Hopefield in Bonnyrigg, Midlothian. It has specialist provision for children from across the authority who have complex needs and a nursery class on site. The school roll continues to rise and a new extension was recently completed to accommodate two classes. The education authority is investing in the development of a joint campus nearby where the nursery classes and P1 classes will be located from its completion in 2020.

### 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

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

The senior leadership team and staff are committed to developing a positive ethos within the school. They take an interest in children as individuals and know their families well. Most children behave well and are motivated to listen to, and follow instructions from adults. They are proud to identify with the school and enjoy wearing its uniform. Almost all children say they like their teachers and have trust in them when they need to ask for help. Learning environments are bright and well resourced. Staff make regular use of the atrium space to provide additional learning opportunities and support for children.

Teachers are developing confidence in the use of digital technologies to enhance teaching. There are a few examples of children using digital technologies regularly to support their learning. The school should continue to build on the use of digital technologies as the learning environment widens and the new accommodation for the P1 classes becomes available. Children report that they would like more opportunities to develop their digital skills. The school should consider ways in which children can lead learning in digital technologies.

In most lessons, teachers use approaches that are often directed by them to the whole class. Most children are eager to learn but too often they become distracted or do not listen well enough to explanations. In a few lessons, children do not sustain their concentration on the tasks they are given. Teachers should work together to develop consistency in their approaches to independent learning. They are making a start to fostering independence by allowing children to choose from multiple activities of varied difficulty. However, this approach is not yet providing children with consistently well-matched learning opportunities and results in too many children not engaging well enough. At the early level, children’s tasks are carefully planned taking into account the support and challenge appropriate for individuals and groups. These tasks are well-matched to engage children and result in them being active in their learning.

In the majority of lessons, the purpose of learning is not made clear enough for children. Teachers do not consistently build on children’s ideas and responses to extend their learning. Experienced teachers and those who are new to the team, should work closely together to
ensure professional learning is implemented well and demonstrated consistently through challenge and feedback. Most children are unclear about the skills they are developing as a result of learning experiences. In a few lessons, teachers’ planning of differentiated learning experiences leads to meeting the needs of almost all children. During these lessons, children articulate the skills they are developing and the strategies they use. This is developing well at the early stage where stimulating and engaging learning experiences support and challenge children’s thinking. At this stage, children exercise choice within their learning and confidently apply skills learned across a variety of contexts. This practice should be shared throughout the school to facilitate purposeful learning experiences across all stages. Senior leaders should make regular class visits to identify the school’s best practice and share this across the teaching team. They should develop consistent approaches to providing high quality learning to ensure pace and challenge is appropriate for all children.

The school uses a variety of assessments to inform how well children are learning and progressing. Assessment information is gathered and discussed termly by staff. At second level, data folders are shared with children to help them know when they are achieving success in Curriculum for Excellence levels. The school should consider how to develop a consistent approach to gathering assessment information for individual children. Parents could be more involved in ways to support learning and helped to understand the school’s practices. Teachers are at an early stage in becoming familiar with national benchmarks. They now need regular and challenging discussions with senior leaders to develop a consistent and clear understanding of what children can be expected to achieve. Senior leaders correctly identify the effective use of assessment and development of moderation as priorities for improvement. They should now take a strategic lead in developing assessment across the school. Staff have undertaken helpful professional learning to enhance their knowledge and understanding of assessment, but this is not yet implemented consistently across the school. The school needs more time to implement and evaluate this work. Senior leaders and staff should develop a whole school approach to planning for learning. This should include an assessment framework to support teachers’ judgements and raise expectations ensuring all children achieve as well as possible. The school’s assessment information is not yet used systematically enough.

The school uses a variety of approaches for planning children’s learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Staff use supportive curriculum pathways developed by the education authority in literacy and numeracy. Children should be more involved in contributing to planning for their own learning. The staff team should decide together, how they can develop consistent approaches to planning and adapt effective practices they are learning from other schools.

Teachers track children’s overall progress in literacy and numeracy through Curriculum for Excellence levels. The school’s tracking approaches help to identify the needs of children from vulnerable groups and with protected characteristics. However, the school has only recently begun to introduce formal systems to track children’s progress. This needs further development and regular professional dialogue between senior leaders and teachers to ensure all children are progressing as well as possible. The school should work towards tracking children’s progress in all areas of the curriculum. Staff monitor data on children’s achievements termly and should now take steps to ensure there are no barriers to children’s participation. Overall, there is a need for senior leaders and teachers to develop skills in data analysis that lead to improved outcomes for all children.
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. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

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, attainment in literacy and English and numeracy and mathematics is weak. Across the school, the majority of children, including those who have additional support needs, are making appropriate progress. A few children at second level, are achieving beyond expected levels in reading and numeracy. At all stages, too few children read for pleasure and have inconsistent opportunities to read at home. There is scope to raise expectations for all children. Teachers should encourage children to take pride in their written work and provide models of good practice. School data on children’s attainment is not yet fully reliable. Predictions from the school suggest a continuing pattern of improvement for 2019/20 where the majority or most children should achieve expected levels. The school needs to take steps to improve consistency in teaching, the use of assessment and increase challenging professional dialogue to ensure teacher judgements are accurate and reliable.

Listening and talking

Children’s attainment in listening and talking is weak. Across the school, the majority of children listen well to instructions from their teachers and answer questions directed to them. Too few are skilled and confident in sharing their views and ideas with others in groups. At early level, most children talk enthusiastically to others during play activities. They listen and respond to one another appropriately. At first level, the majority of children respond well to different types of questions and share ideas using appropriate vocabulary. At second level, the majority of children are making satisfactory progress in talking but fewer are skilled in listening. The majority of children are confident when talking about their learning with a partner. Most are confident when talking to adults and responding to questions from teachers. Almost all classes should develop children’s skills in co-operative learning and turn taking in discussions together.

Reading

Overall, the majority of children are making appropriate progress. At early level, the majority of children are developing their knowledge of sounds and letters to read simple words. At first level, the majority of children use context clues and decoding to help their understanding of what they have read. At second level, the majority of children are making appropriate progress in reading and most are motivated to read regularly in class. To further encourage their reading for enjoyment and to give children opportunities to make informed personal choices, the school should develop its use of the library and encourage older children to take roles of responsibilities. Teachers need to ensure group reading books are sufficiently available for home reading and agree whole school approaches to how parents can support reading at home.
Writing

- Across the school, fewer than half of the children are making appropriate progress in writing and they produce too few examples of written work. At early level, the majority of children form most lower case letters legibly and attempt to spell familiar words correctly. At first level, the majority of children spell commonly used words and attempt to use their developing knowledge of phonics to spell both familiar and unfamiliar words. At second level, too few children write extended pieces of text and do not structure writing well enough. Across the school, children would benefit from more regular and consistent feedback about their writing and how to achieve success. While some writing is linked well to topics of interest, most children are not yet sufficiently skilled in applying writing skills to a wide range of relevant contexts across the curriculum.

Numeracy

- Overall, attainment in numeracy is weak. Data provided by the school indicates that almost all children achieve early level in Curriculum for Excellence by the end of P1, most achieve first level by the end of P4 and second level by the end of P7. School data on children’s attainment is not yet fully reliable. Only a majority of children in P7 are on target to achieve second level. The proportion of children currently in P7 achieving second level is likely to be only a majority. A few of the children currently in P7 have achieved substantial progress towards attaining third level. Some of these children work with the associated secondary school as a strategy to maximise their attainment. Teachers should continue to develop their approaches to assess children’s progress and achievement of a level accurately.

Number money and measurement

- At early level, most children recognise numbers up to twenty and can count on and back with numbers up to thirty. Most children use the correct language to describe the length and height of objects using non-standard units. At first level, children’s understanding of number beyond addition and subtraction is too limited. Although children describe different number patterns, they are not confident in basic multiplication calculations. A few children have quick recall of these facts and apply them appropriately to solve problems. Children would benefit from opportunities to calculate change within £10. The majority of children working at second level, are attaining appropriate standards in key aspects of number, money and measurement. A substantial minority lack confidence in mental tasks and are not skilled at working without direct supervision. They have limited knowledge of strategies to help them with number tasks using fractions. At second level, the majority of children are making appropriate progress with the four number functions, but often lack confidence in their calculations. The majority understand the concepts of profit and loss, from tasks relating to budgeting. A few children showed particular skills in estimating dimensions of a room, then calculating the perimeter and floor area.

Shape position and movement

- At early level, most children recognise and name common 2D shapes and 3D objects. They successfully describe these shapes and objects using mathematical language. At first level, there is limited evidence to demonstrate children’s progress in shape, position and movement. Children do not have a clear understanding of the properties of basic 3D objects. The majority of children at second level, show clear understanding of 2D shapes and 3D objects. A few are skilled at describing and comparing features of 3D objects. They demonstrate appropriate problem solving approaches when estimating an angle and are beginning to develop skills in applying learning to real contexts such as the structure of the Queensferry Crossing.

Information handling

- At early level, most children sort information into pictographs and diagrams. They answer simple questions about data. At first level, children collect information to display in a simple bar graph. As children move through first level they should receive greater challenge regarding the
context and increased expectations about how information is presented accurately. Most children are not yet skilled in collating and displaying information in the form of graphs. At second level, most children recall some features of surveys they have carried out as groups. They recall the techniques they use to record information, including tally marks. Children’s experience of using information and communications technology (ICT) for gathering, processing and presenting information is too limited.

**Attainment over time**

- The school has access to a wide range of information on children’s achievements in literacy and numeracy. Staff are developing skills and approaches to assessing accurately children’s achievement of a Curriculum for Excellence level. Regular monitoring and professional dialogue to analyse data will increase its reliability over time. Over the three sessions 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, school data on children’s attainment shows some improvement overall.

- There is significant headroom to further improve children’s attainment. Staff should continue to develop learning, teaching and assessment to ensure they meet the needs of all children. Increased pace and challenge and rigorous tracking and monitoring should be implemented across the school. Senior leaders should continue to develop systematic approaches to tracking children’s progress. They should ensure systematic approaches to monitoring attainment over time are effective in identifying trends and potential issues.

**Overall quality of learners’ achievement**

- Most children are developing skills in the four capacities of Curriculum for Excellence through a range of opportunities offered to them. They are developing leadership skills through participation in the Eco Council, P7 Squads and Sports Council. The school should consider ways to build on these opportunities so that more children can take increased responsibilities and lead activities.

- Children’s wider achievements are recognised and displayed attractively on school notice boards. The children are proud of their achievements and should be supported to recognise the skills they are developing through wider achievement opportunities. Children’s participation in drama, football, basketball and athletics clubs are recorded regularly. A whole school tracking system, which identifies children who do not participate and may be at risk of missing out, should be developed to ensure all children achieve equity in their success.

**Equity for all learners**

- Staff know children and families well. They have a shared understanding of the socio-economic context of the school. Teachers are motivated to implement a variety of initiatives to help support children’s learning and progress in literacy and numeracy. Senior leaders and staff should evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives in bringing about positive impact on outcomes for children. Staff should now make effective use of assessment and track progress more systematically to demonstrate how well the school measures closing its attainment gap.
The school receives significant levels of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). This is invested in professional learning for teachers to improve the consistency of teaching approaches across the school. The school has employed additional staff who have roles to support children and families. School information demonstrates that children’s attendance levels and punctuality have improved. Across the provision, staff report on progress and improved outcomes for a few children. For example, a few children are making progress in their communication and social skills. There is a lack of robust evidence to show progressive and continued improvements for all children. Staff need to understand better the individual needs of all children and provide targeted support to meet these needs. Overall, senior leaders should now rigorously track the impact of targeted supports to ensure attainment is increased for children who face barriers to their learning.
Other relevant evidence

- The school roll has more than doubled since it first opened in 2012. Families move into newly constructed homes on an ongoing basis. The education authority continues to develop the school’s capacity and provision through the expansion of accommodation for the nursery and P1 stages. A new building, Burnbrae Early, is under construction and located on a nearby joint campus with St Mary’s RC Primary. The education authority has invested in a recently completed school extension which provides bright and spacious accommodation for two P7 classes. The school needs more time to adopt new practices as it evolves into two locations. Strategic leadership is important to ensure continued improvement and success as children, staff and parents adapt to new surroundings and make effective use of new facilities.
Quality of provision of Special Unit (contributes to school evaluations)

The roll in the unit provision is 44 children who are arranged in four classes. Children in the provision have a range of additional support needs. Almost all children have shared mainstream placements either in Burnbrae Primary School or their local mainstream school.

**QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment**

- Across the unit provision, most children have positive relationships with staff. Staff demonstrate caring and supportive interactions with children. However, the quality of learning and teaching has important weaknesses and needs to be improved. The senior leadership team need to provide effective leadership and support in order to improve the quality of learning and teaching. They need to implement robust quality assurance approaches in the provision.

- Most learning activities do not provide enough challenge or opportunities to achieve success. Staff should ensure learning is more active and challenging with less reliance on worksheet based activities. Staff do not provide enough opportunities for children to learn in practical and meaningful contexts. For a few children, there needs to be increased opportunities for them to learn alongside their peers.

- In almost all classes, staff need to improve teaching approaches. Pedagogy should be appropriate to the diverse range of needs within each class. For a few children, they need to have more access to input from teachers. In a few classes, staff need to improve the organisation of resources. A few rooms are overcrowded and this impacts on aspects of teaching and learning such as group working and space for play.

- The provision has insufficient opportunities for children to contribute their ideas or views about their learning or wider school issues. Children in the provision need to have meaningful opportunities to be involved in discussions about their learning. They need to demonstrate being responsible, successful, effective and confident. Staff should engage with national guidance to improve learner participation.

- Children are not supported sufficiently to understand what they are good at or what they need to do to improve. There is a need to improve teaching approaches to ensure children have a better understanding of what they are learning and the progress they are making. Written and verbal feedback provided by staff is not detailed enough. Staff need to improve the feedback given to children to help them understand their strengths and next steps.

- A few children face challenges in moderating their behaviour. Staff need to ensure children are supported well to allow them to engage more effectively in learning. Staff need to review behaviour support strategies, including physical intervention, and ensure strategies are being used appropriately.

- Teachers plan children’s learning using a range of approaches and planning documentation. Planning approaches across the provision are too varied and unclear. Planning does not take sufficient account of children’s individual needs. The range and quality of documents limit progressive planning across curriculum areas. In all classes, staff need to plan more effectively to ensure differentiated learning activities that meet the individual needs of children.

- Assessment approaches are not robust or consistent across the provision. They do not provide teachers with relevant information about what children have achieved. Assessments for a few children, particularly in numeracy, are not at the appropriate level. As a result, children complete very few questions successfully. Staff need to ensure assessments for children include only aspects of the curriculum that they have been learning. Senior leaders and staff
need to develop an assessment rationale across the provision. All staff need to have a shared understanding of how they will assess children’s progress and how the information will inform future planning.

- Senior leaders and staff in the provision, do not currently monitor or track the progress children are making. There is a need to develop systems to monitor and evaluate the children’s progress with a focus on raising attainment and achievement.

**Raising attainment and achievement**

- As a result of the lack of tracking and monitoring approaches, information about attainment of children in the provision is not reliable or robust. The CfE levels that children are reportedly working at and predictions for achievement of a level, are not reflected in the activities children are asked to do. Overall attainment is weak. Most children are not achieving well enough or making sufficient progress.

**Literacy and English**

- The majority of children listen well to staff and follow instructions. A few children listen to each other appropriately and take turns in small group situations. Most children need to develop their listening skills and communication skills further. At the early stages, a few children interact well with stories by turning pages and identifying features of pictures within books. A few children working within early level, are reading fluently. At early level, a few children are unable to recognise initial sounds or phonemes. Across the provision, children need to develop reading skills across a range of genre such as recipes and reports. Across the provision children are forming letters and writing words and sentences. The presentation of written work is not of a high quality. Sentences do have correct punctuation. There are too few opportunities for children to develop their writing for a range of purposes. As a result, children’s writing skills are not well developed.

**Numeracy and mathematics**

- Children at the early level are developing their positional language such as front and behind. They are not secure in their understanding of this language. Children working within early level are successfully completing addition sums involving tens and units. They are using their understanding of addition to complete simple word problems successfully. A few children are identifying accurately 2D shapes. Children at senior stages are mentally calculating addition and subtraction sums well. A few are beginning to attempt division calculations but do not have a thorough understanding of division. Children at the senior stages are completing mathematical calculations and problems with limited success. Children across the provision could make better progress in numeracy and mathematics.

**Overall quality of achievement**

- Children have a few opportunities to develop skills through activities such as the community café. There is a need to ensure children have access to a wider range of activities to enable them to develop important skills for life beyond school. Children talk about activities such as residential outings. However, they do not have an understanding about the skills they are developing or how they will use them in other contexts.

- Almost all children have opportunities to attend mainstream provision in Burnbrae Primary School or in their local primary school. There is a need to review these placements to ensure children are achieving success. It is not clear how placements in mainstream schools are planned, monitored or evaluated. For a few children, attendance at a mainstream school is not always a positive experience.
Children are not aware of approaches for celebrating success or achievements. There is a need to develop consistent approaches to help children understand and celebrate their achievements.
Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almost all</td>
<td>91%-99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td>75%-90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority</td>
<td>50%-74%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minority/less than half</td>
<td>15%-49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few</td>
<td>less than 15%</td>
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Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.